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Unlocking the psychology of character : imagery of the subconscious in the works of F. M. Dostoevskii

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This thesis examines imagery of the subconscious throughout the works of Fedor Mikhailovich Dostoevskii and how it can be used to analyse the psychology of his characters and the author himself. While studies exist on the role of, for example, dreams in Dostoevskii's works, this thesis aims to comprehensively examine the author's experience and use of subconscious phenomena as a whole, and their most important role in his texts: their effect on the characters who experience them.

In each chapter, one form of this imagery in Dostoevskii's works is explained and analysed with respect to individual characters or themes, and then Dostoevskii's own experiences of the relevant subconscious phenomenon are explored. Chapter 1 looks at imagery arising through characters' daydreams, while the author's recurrent theme of childhood memories is also analysed as a type of nostalgic daydream. Chapter 2 examines the 'greyer' area of dreamlike reality, which in itself operates at two poles: confusion between dream and reality; and reality so intense as to appear unreal. The role of the 'unreal' city of St Petersburg is also analysed, as well as Dostoevskii's narrative mode of 'fantastic realism'. Chapter 3 looks at characters' hallucinations, while Chapter 4 focuses on the character of Goliadkin in *Двойник* and his decline into split personality. Chapter 5 analyses the imagery of dreams, be they of anxiety and warning, of catharsis and peripeteia, or those featuring Dostoevskii's recurring motif of the 'Golden Age' of mankind.

The final chapter differs slightly in form by focusing on the overarching condition of epilepsy. Analysis of the author's principal epileptic character, Prince Myshkin in *Идиот*, reveals the 'deepest' point of subconscious imagery, the ecstatic aura. Upon examining the condition's recorded effects on Dostoevskii, epilepsy is ultimately discerned as the origin of many of the author's experiences of subconscious phenomena and, in turn, the imagery of the subconscious used in his works.

Moreover, experiences of subconscious phenomena are found to be a vital source of literary inspiration and motivation for Dostoevskii; so the correlating imagery of the subconscious is thus able to reveal fictional characters' deepest drives and can be used as a means to glean vital, otherwise unseen, insights into their psychology.

CONTENTS

DECLARATION

I declare that my thesis title embodies the results of my own special work, that it has been composed by myself, and that it does not include work forming part of a thesis presented successfully for a degree at this or another university.

for Clare,

for my parents,

for everything

Frequently there is nothing that the psychologist can add that the poet has not already said in better words.

Carl Gustav Jung

The true artist is never but half-conscious of himself when creating. He does not know exactly who he is. He learns to know himself only through his creation, in it, and after it. Dostoevsky never set out to find himself; he gave himself without stint in his works. He lost himself in each of the characters of his books, and, for this reason, it is in them that he can be found again.

André Gide

Посмотрите, какие разнообразные приключения, какой бесконечный рой восторженных грез.

Dostoevskii, ***Белые ночи***

INTRODUCTION

This thesis intends to examine a certain type of imagery and the way it can be used to analyse the aspect of character in Dostoevskii's works. 'Imagery of the subconscious' is a term chosen to encapsulate images created within or projected from the subconscious of a character. Taken individually the two nouns of this phrase can be rather ambivalent, so the use of the terms 'imagery' and 'subconscious' requires clarification from the outset.

J. A. Cuddon's broad definition of 'imagery' is perhaps the most appropriate to the purpose of this thesis: 'Imagery as a general term covers the use of language to represent objects, actions, feelings, thoughts, ideas, states of mind and any sensory or extra-sensory experience.'[1] Imagery stands as the body of these images in a literary work, or series of works. They are often conveyed by figurative language such as metaphor, simile, synecdoche, onomatopoeia and metonymy, but also in boldly expressive and descriptive terms. They 'evoke sense-impressions by literal or figurative reference to perceptible or "concrete" objects, scenes, actions, or states, as distinct from the language of abstract argument or exposition.'[2] Moreover, these 'sense-impressions' are not restricted to sight: 'An image may be visual (pertaining to the eye), olfactory (smell), tactile (touch), auditory (hearing), gustatory (taste), abstract (in which case it will appeal to what may be described as the intellect) and kinaesthetic (pertaining to the sense of movement and bodily effort).'[3] It may also be synaesthetic, that is, described as a different sense from what would be expected: for example, hearing colours or seeing noises.

The use of the term 'imagery' for the purpose of this thesis becomes more appropriate when one considers that the term 'image' can be more fully defined in psychological terms as a 'mental image', i.e., 'A mental representation of a stimulus in the absence of the physical stimulus, formed by imagination or memory'.[4] While

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[1] J. A. Cuddon. *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1998, p. 251
[2] Chris Baldick. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2001, pp. 121-22
[3] Cuddon, p. 251
[4] Andrew M. Colman. *A Dictionary of Psychology*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2001, p. 356

this description pertains to mental images that are formed during consciousness, it can also be applied to the range of phenomena explored in this thesis that are products of characters' subconscious: they too are products of imagination and memory. This very definition of 'image' offers a bridge between the literary and psychological aspects of this study: just as these mental images are products of the mind, so are literary images products of the author's mind, or the imagination; and, in turn, if we take into account imagery of the subconscious in literature, these images appear in the minds of characters. Moreover, the term 'imagery' in a psychological sense is defined as referring to 'the whole imaging process'[5], thereby encapsulating the production of mental images in daily life and in literary endeavour.

The term 'subconscious' has even more potential pitfalls and its use in this thesis must be clearly explained and justified.

It should be made clear from the outset that this thesis does not toe any particular theoretical line and, above all, it is not a psychoanalytical study. This in itself partly explains the decision to use the term 'subconscious', a word discarded by Freud at an early stage in his work.[6] However, as depth psychology is an inescapable part of this thesis, and several psychoanalytic critics are quoted throughout, Freud's work cannot be completely ignored and ought to be at least basically explained. Therefore, it is against his classic model of the psyche, set out in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), that an explanation of this study's usage of the term 'subconscious' will be made. Although Freud later modified this topography with his classification of id-ego-superego, his definitions of the unconscious, preconscious and conscious have continued to hold sway.

Freud's model posits a preconscious and unconscious mind existing below the conscious mind. The unconscious is defined as the most fully submerged part of the mind, 'a domain of the psyche encompassing the repressed id functions, the primitive impulses and desires, the memories, images and wishes that are too anxiety-provoking to be accepted into consciousness'[7]. These contents 'are not accessible to

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[5] Arthur S. and Emily S. Reber. *The Penguin Dictionary of Psychology*, Penguin, London, 2001, p. 341
[6] Colman, p. 714
[7] Reber and Reber, pp. 773-74

direct examination … The operation of repression prevents the contents of the unconscious from entering either consciousness or the preconscious and a barrier of censorship exists between the unconscious and the preconscious-conscious system'[8].

The preconscious holds 'mental contents that are not currently in consciousness but are accessible to consciousness by directing attention to them, such as memories that are not at present being recalled but that can be recalled at will'[9]. This definition is commonly used for the subconscious as well, although it is eschewed by psychoanalysts. The term 'subconscious' has even become popularized to an extent as a substitute for the unconscious, but this is actively discouraged in psychology.[10]

As a basis for justifying the use of the term 'subconscious' in this thesis, Andrew M. Colman's most basic definition of the word is taken as a basis: 'Operating or existing outside of consciousness.'[11] During research, it seemed that models of mental processes such as Freud's were too rigid to cater to the purposes of the thesis, particularly with the varying states of consciousness (or unconsciousness) a character such as Raskol'nikov experiences in just one of Dostoevskii's works.

Therefore, in this study, the 'subconscious' refers to a sliding scale of mental activity that operates below consciousness, which cannot knowingly be controlled by the subject apart from at its very most 'shallow' depths. 'Consciousness' here refers to a full awareness of reality and alert reaction to external stimuli; below this are the seemingly bottomless depths of the subconscious mode. In a sense, this definition of the subconscious is a kind of free-flowing version of Freud's topography, in that it takes into account preconscious and unconscious content as part of a fluid whole. It is on this subconscious scale that Dostoevskii bases much of his imagery, the most obvious example of which would be his many dream episodes (which would reside in the Freudian unconscious); although it also pertains to his characters' idle wanderings of imagination that manifest themselves much closer to consciousness (which would reside in the Freudian preconscious). However, a great deal of overlap between subconscious layers is apparent. The anthropologist and psychologist

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[8] Colman, p. 766
[9] Ibid., pp. 574-75
[10] Reber and Reber, p. 719
[11] Colman, p. 714

Weston La Barre refers to a similarly fluid psychic model that he dubs the 'continuity hypothesis': 'Hypnosis, hysteria, and hallucination in dream, vision, delusion, and trance show manifestly infinite gradations in altered states of consciousness, with respect to their relative proportions of dereistic REM versus sense-nourished contact with "reality". … our minds operate variously between the poles of deep dreaming and wakened consciousness'[12].

One other point of note concerning terminology is the fact that there appears to be a common Russian translation of the nouns 'unconscious' and 'subconscious'. The Oxford English-Russian dictionary has both as *подсознание*; and, oddly, the Russian term is translated back as 'subconscious' instead of the more acceptable (in the psychologist's view) 'unconscious'. This serves to support the argument for a fluid 'subconscious' over the more rigid system of a compartmentalised psyche, *à la* Freud. In the Russian mindset, at least, there appears to be no distinction between the unconscious and subconscious, and the term *подсознание* can therefore be construed as being analogous to the 'subconscious' as used in this thesis.

Furthermore, depth psychology was in its very infancy at the time when Dostoevskii was writing, though he knew of pioneers in the field such as Carl Gustav Carus. As a result, contemporary models of the subconscious mind would have undoubtedly been less structured and more akin to a fluid realm of psychic activity that differed in intensity. It is such unstructured models that Dostoevskii (a keen reader of medical literature) would take a cue from, and so it seems appropriate to base this study of his works on a fluid subconscious.[13]

The very fact that he derived influence from exploratory scientists such as Carus shows that Dostoevskii was a pioneer of psychological realism and, indeed, he said from an early age that he wanted to explore the depths of what it means to be

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[12] Weston La Barre, 'Anthropological perspectives on hallucination and hallucinogens', in R. K. Siegel and L. J. West (eds.), *Hallucinations – Behavior, Experience, and Theory*, John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1975, p. 20.

[13] See James L. Rice, *Dostoevsky and the Healing Art: An Essay in Literary and Medical History*, Ardis, Ann Arbor, 1985, for an overview of the psychological theories of Carus and others, and Dostoevskii's interest in them.

human[14]. What this thesis intends to argue is that imagery of the subconscious lies at the root of this realism, and in fact moves the author's technique beyond basic behavioural science to a deeper-rooted, less explainable psychology. In episodes of Dostoevskii's fiction where such imagery occurs, the ordinary reality of the text is called into question, while, simultaneously, aspects of the character's subconscious are revealed. As a result, they offer a chance to glean a deeper understanding of that character's fundamental drives: for example, their irrational fears, desires or motives. Therefore, imagery of the subconscious can perhaps provide a means to understanding – or 'unlocking' as it were – the psychology of character.

It is hoped that this analysis can be taken even further by following these roots of character to their creator. Some of Dostoevskii's own experiences of subconscious phenomena may have found their way into his characters; and therefore, a certain degree of his own subconscious may lie in his characters. By tracing such connections back from character to author, it can be ascertained to what extent Dostoevskii's imagery of the subconscious can tell us about Dostoevskii himself. Perhaps his mind can be 'unlocked' too.

The method of working 'backwards' as it were, from the author's works to his life instead of *vice versa*, is employed essentially because the basis of this thesis lies in a device of fiction: imagery. It is therefore in the fiction that the author's body of images can be found, which can then be related to the author's experiences. Moreover, this fictional imagery lends a fuller picture of the author's interests, drives, hopes and fears than the experiences he recorded in intermittent letters, journals and diary entries. This is what the epigraph by André Gide pertains to: a writer such as Dostoevskii, who invested such time and effort in his works (often to the point of illness) 'gave himself without stint in these works'[15], much more so than in his non-fiction writings. It is therefore in these works that 'we can find him again': by formulating a collection of his imagery from the fiction he devoted so much of his

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[14] In a letter to his brother Mikhail on August 16, 1839, Dostoevskii writes: 'учиться, «что значит человек и жизнь», – в этом довольно успеваю я […] Человек есть тайна. Ее надо разгадать, и ежели будешь ее разгадывать всю жизнь, то не говори, что потерял время; я занимаюсь этой тайной, ибо хочу быть человеком.' (28/1:63)

[15] André Gide, *Dostoevsky* (trans. Arnold Bennett), New Directions, New York, 1961

life to, and then tracing connections to recorded episodes of his life, insights into the author's psychology can be better illuminated.

Researching this thesis has involved unearthing every single episode in Dostoevskii's collected works featuring imagery that has at least a possible or partial basis in a character's subconscious; and also records of the author's own experiences of correlating phenomena. This has then been extended beyond the author's published material to his many notebooks, journals, unfinished or barely started material, and different versions of established works. By being as comprehensive as possible in this initial stage of research, it was hoped that overall patterns of this imagery could be better established.

This led to the classification of the six major sections which comprise this thesis, which it seemed were the most dominant and consistent modes of imagery of the subconscious both in Dostoevskii's works, and also experientially in his life. These sections are arranged in order of relative subconscious 'depth'. That is to say, certain imagery or experiences are more firmly entrenched deeper within the subconscious while the subject is asleep or unconscious (i.e., not conscious); others can take place at a near-conscious level. It is proposed to start at the 'shallow end' of this range before moving deeper into the subconscious mode with each subsequent section.

Therefore, the first chapter focuses on the 'shallow' imagery and experiences of daydreams, with the subsequent ones then moving through the progressively 'deeper' subconscious layers of dreamlike reality, hallucinations, split personality, dreams, and epileptic phenomena. This final chapter also takes into account the overarching role of epilepsy in Dostoevskii's life and works.

Each chapter is prefaced by an explanation of the type of imagery/experience, which is grounded in medical terminology to make each definition as sound as possible. Chapters are then split into sub-sections examining a character who experiences the imagery in question – or a particularly unifying theme pertaining to that imagery – and each finishes on an examination of Dostoevskii's personal experiences of that type of subconscious phenomena. Some characters appear in more than one chapter, and, together, a cumulative analysis using these different aspects of their psychology

is attempted. However, a complete, detailed examination of each character is deemed outwith the scope of this thesis.

Some of these subconscious episodes appear more frequently in Dostoevskii's texts than others, and so chapters are of different lengths. This also occurs because episodes of, for example, dreamlike reality, have required the examination of substantial portions of text – unlike more concentrated, episodical phenomena such as hallucinations and dreams.

In essence, the thesis will look for patterns and correlations between imagery and the text as a whole, and also between imagery and actual experience. It is hoped that imagery of the subconscious can be used as an effective tool to unearth, analyse and 'unlock' character because, essentially, this imagery *can only be portrayed through* character. That is to say, dreams, hallucinations *et al* come from the subconscious – the subconscious of Dostoevskii's characters, and ultimately of Dostoevskii himself. It could be said that this imagery is almost an *expression* of character.

Although there is a certain wariness in some critics in connecting biography to the text[16], employing such a method underlines the independence of this thesis from any particular mindset or theory. By working with the first-hand texts and facts as are extant, an effective, objective analysis of the task can be achieved. Antony Johae is one critic of Dostoevskii who agrees with such an approach. He writes:

> instead of looking outwards at the wider metaphysical territory of symbolism and endeavouring to establish a dogmatic hierarchy, we ought to begin by investigating the motivation of the author himself in order to appreciate the private significance of his symbology. … Only when a causal link between fact and fiction has been established – that is, between the biography of the author and his reconstruction of it in his art – will it be possible to discern the existential significance of the images he uses. In this way we can avoid attributing to Dostoevsky a generalized metaphysical schema of symbols drawn from philosophy and theology and concentrate instead on the emergent symbols of the author's creative subconscious.[17]

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[16] The psychoanalyst Elizabeth Dalton writes: 'in literary criticism, the text has priority over the life. Biographical material should be used, therefore, not to arrive at an interpretation, but only to support and confirm what is first discovered in the work itself.' (*Unconscious Structure in The Idiot – A Study in Literature and Psychoanalysis.* Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1979, pp. 27-28)

[17] Antony Johae. 'Expressive symbols in Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*', *Scottish Slavonic Review*, 20, Spring 1993, pp. 17-22

Consequently, this thesis also hopes to display the power of imagery of the subconscious, which holds a unique fascination for writers and readers – Dostoevskii being a case in point on both counts. Even the least attentive reader of his works will recognise the many episodes of imagery of the subconscious that consistently appear across his 35 years of output, as well as a general uncanniness of atmosphere that is the product of the author's particular brand of realism. This derives from a certain gothic literary influence and, more significantly, the author's own experiences of episodes that had a basis in his own subconscious. It is one reason why Dostoevskii's fiction still retains its power today: our inherent fascination with imagery and experiences of subconscious content stems from its unusual, often uncanny, and most of all *universal* nature. We all have dreams, for instance, but cannot readily explain them. Moreover, these mysterious experiences have been an inherent part of man since at least recorded history began. Such phenomena may have even accelerated or created recorded history and the human condition as we know it today; by some accounts it may have even given rise to religion through the 'discovery' of a soul. Michel Jouvet writes of dreams:

> I wonder how long it was before this nightly repetition of fantastic imagery led him [man] to the essential conclusion that marked the dawn of humanity? That some immaterial element, some 'spirit' or 'soul' must exist, fundamentally different from the material body, an untiring and invisible spirit *that stays awake during sleep*.[18]

For Lancelot Whyte, among others, the deep subconscious (or Freudian 'unconscious', as he refers to it) is where such powerful 'ordering concepts' such as religion still reside: '…today *faith, if it bears any relation to the natural world, implies faith in the unconscious*. If there is a God, he must speak there; if there is a healing power, it must operate there; if there is a principle of ordering in the organic realm, its most powerful manifestation must be found there.'[19] Again, such mentally powerful concepts are universal among humankind, though we may interpret them differently or, indeed, choose to ignore them. 'The springs of human nature lie in the

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[18] Michel Jouvet. *The Paradox of Sleep: The Story of Dreaming* (trans. Laurence Garey), MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., London, c1999, pp. 27-28

[19] Lancelot Law Whyte. *The Unconscious Before Freud*, Tavistock Publications, London, 1960, pp. 9-10

unconscious,' Whyte adds, 'for it links the individual with the universal, or at least the organic.'[20]

It is in this inscrutable yet universal condition in humankind that lies the imaginative and, in turn, literary power of imagery that becomes manifest when the reader is given access to the subconscious of a character. Here we can glimpse these very 'springs of human nature'. Perhaps this imagery, then, is the very expression of Dostoevskii's aim to discover 'что значит человек и жизнь' (28/1:63).

Although this study does not follow any particular theoretical line, certain terms and methods are borrowed from psychoanalysis, neuropsychology and structuralism (to name just three) for explanatory or analogical purposes. But largely the given interpretations of imagery of the subconscious are relatively straightforward and free from specific schools of thought. However, some passages of criticism make reference to the Freudian unconscious; in these cases it is taken to be analogous with the deeper areas of the 'subconscious' as defined for the purpose of this thesis. Any apparent incongruities between the theories used in quoted criticism and the term 'subconscious' in this thesis are clarified immediately before, during or after the quote, as per Whyte above.

This thesis follows the Library of Congress transliteration rules, but names quoted in secondary material remain true to that source and therefore may appear different. All quotes from Dostoevskii's fiction, and most of his non-fiction, are taken from the 30-volume *Полное собрание сочинений* (Наука, Ленинград, 1972-1990), and are referenced immediately after the quotation by the volume number and page number, for example (5:101). Where the volume is split into two books, the book number is given after a forward slash, for example (28/1:63) in the previous paragraph. Dates of letters by Dostoevskii and his contemporaries are given in the Julian calendar, as was used at the time. Due to the number of ellipses in Dostoevskii's works, where I have required to abridge a passage in his primary material I have used an ellipse inside square brackets. All other sources are referred to in footnotes.

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[20] Ibid., p. 69

1. DAYDREAMS

While being at the most 'conscious' pole on the scale of this thesis, simple daydreams (*мечты*)[21] nevertheless occupy a prevalent position in the canon of Dostoevskii's subconscious imagery. Despite their seemingly innocuous nature, the author sees such minor daydreams as no less a powerful and influential phenomenon than 'deeper' modes of this imagery. They can become an obsessive addiction, removing the respective character from their daily hardships and locking them into a world detached from reality, almost always to their detriment. Dostoevskii evidently felt it was important to constantly underline that daydreaming is ultimately a futile answer to life's difficulties, as failed daydreamers span his entire literary output: from Devushkin in *Бедные люди* (1846) to Captain Snegirev and Kalganov in *Братья Карамазовы* (1881).

In order to give daydreaming credence as a subconscious phenomenon, it should be pointed out that this process has been scientifically linked to what would be considered the 'deeper' process of dreaming:

> Human subjects isolated from cues about time or day, or some in their normal environment, show a 90-minute cycle of daydreaming that is characterized by vivid sensory imagery. Ultradian rhythms in the performance of various tasks may reflect fluctuations in alertness, which may account for the ultradian rhythm in the performance of a poorly motivated subject.[22]

The 90-minute cycle of this 'ultradian' rhythm can be linked to the 90-110 minute cycle of rapid eye movement (REM) sleep that is the basis for dreaming; both involve the 'vivid sensory imagery' described. What is also interesting here is the state of the subjects, who, like many of Dostoevskii's protagonists, are 'isolated from cues about time or day'. Characters such as Raskol'nikov and the *мечтатель* of *Белые ночи*, for example, have irregular sleep patterns due to their respective obsessions. The 'white nights' of the St Petersburg summer, in which night gets no darker than twilight due to the city's northern latitude, also serve to confuse the brain

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[21] See appendix for a discussion on the different Russian words for 'dream'.
[22] Mark R. Rosenzweig, S. Marc Breedlove, Arnold L. Leiman. *Biological Psychology: An introduction to behavioral, cognitive, and clinical neuroscience* (3rd edition), Sinauer Associates, Sunderland, Mass., 2005, p. 432

as to the time of day. These cues, then, could certainly summon the 'vivid sensory imagery' of daydreaming experienced by Dostoevskii's *мечтатели* – who, in a wider social sense, could certainly be seen as 'poorly motivated' and far from alert to reality.

It is also apparent on a scientific level that daydreams can become as obsessive as Dostoevskii describes them:

> Some fantasies are obsessive and continue even when the subject tries to terminate them. … Even normal daydreams are largely involuntary. The dozing person does not have control of the reveries he is having, any more than he controls the flow of visual experiences produced by his open eyes. The images seem to flow on by their own laws. It is true that the subject can terminate or modify the reverie in the sense that he can rouse himself; but this is control of an indirect type and does not differ from the control he has over his perceptions.[23]

It seems relatively easy for the brain to become 'locked in' to an overriding fantasy or daydream, to an obsessive degree. This is certainly the case of the *мечтатели* in Dostoevskii's works.

Such obsessive ideas form the basis of moments of 'inspirational illumination'[24], powerful, more immediate impressions that tend to bring existing *мечты* clearer into focus or to a culmination. Such striking of inspiration is by no means a recent phenomenon in human development; and, as Elizabeth Dalton points out, it too can be linked to deeper subconscious (from her psychoanalytical standpoint, unconscious) processes:

> Since ancient times, the experience of inspiration has been likened to regressive mental states such as dreams and madness. … In inspirational states, there is often a breakthrough into an area of experience that is normally inaccessible, a rush of ideas, associations, and images so rapid and exciting that ordinary thought processes can scarcely transcribe them. Inspiration is often felt as coming from some source so entirely alien to ordinary life that it can only be represented as a supernatural being – a god, a muse, an angel, or a demon. The unconscious sources of inspiration *are*, of course, alien to consciousness, and so the ego

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[23] C. Wade Savage, 'The Continuity of Perceptual and Cognitive Experiences', in *Hallucinations – Behavior, Experience, and Theory*, R. K. Siegel and L.J. West (eds.) John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1975, p. 272

[24] The term is my own.

> experiences them as something – a voice or vision – coming from outside itself.[25]

Inspirational illumination removes the daydreamer to an alien world of ideas, and connects him or her to something much wider than anything experienced previously – perhaps even something existential, or to what the psychoanalyst Carl Gustav Jung termed the 'collective unconscious': a deep-seated region of the psyche in which resides the collected experience of humanity, and which gives birth to myth and the archetypal images of dreams. This collective unconscious may be taken as the deepest-known part of the subconscious on the sliding scale that has been adopted for the purpose of this thesis. It is a resource that Dostoevskii, as well as other great writers and artists, seems to have tapped frequently – whether he recognised it or not. Dalton adds that, for the artist, 'words and images and stories reverberate with their earliest meanings, and his work becomes for us, too, the way back to that archaic world whose desires and energies are the well-springs of life.'[26]

As daydreams (*мечты*) and daydreaminess (*мечтательность*) are ever-present traits of character, the relevant characters and works analysed will be done so in depth, in order to glean as much information from the text as possible.

Мечтатель

It is Dostoevskii's early period that provides us with the richest source material from which to draw out the typology of the daydreamer, with the frequent appearances of the *мечтатель* character type in his works of the 1840s. A feuilleton by the author dated June 15, 1847, part of the series *Петербургская летопись*, gives us the most detailed template of the common traits and lifestyle of this chronic daydreamer type. It is best to quote this passage at length:

> в характерах, жадных деятельности, жадных непосредственной жизни, жадных действительности, но слабых, женственных, нежных, мало-помалу зарождается то, что называют мечтательностью, и человек делается наконец не человеком, а каким-то странным существом среднего рода – *мечтателем*. А знаете ли, что такое мечтатель, господа? Это кошмар

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[25] Dalton, p. 48
[26] Ibid., p. 54

петербургский, это олицетворенный грех, это трагедия, безмолвная, таинственная, угрюмая, со всеми катастрофами, перепетиями, завязками и развязками […] Мечтатель всегда тяжел, потому что неровен до крайности […] В службе эти господа решительно не годятся […] Они чувствуют глубокое отвращение от всякой формальности […] Селятся они большею частию в глубоком уединении, по неприступным углам, как будто таясь в них от людей и от света […] Они угрюмы и неразговорчивы с домашними, углублены в себя, но очень любят всё ленивое, легкое, созерцательное, всё действующее нежно на чувство или возбуждающее ощущения. Они любят читать, и читать всякие книги, даже серьезные, специальные, но обыкновенно со второй, третьей страницы бросают чтение, ибо удовлетворились вполне. Фантазия их, подвижная, летучая, легкая, уже возбуждена, впечатление настроено, и целый мечтательный мир, с радостями, с горестями, с адом и раем, с пленительнейшими женщинами, с геройскими подвигами, с благородною деятельностью, всегда с какой-нибудь гигантской борьбою, с преступлениями и всякими ужасами, вдруг овладевает всем бытием мечтателя. Комната исчезает, пространство тоже, время останавливается или летит так быстро, что час идет за минуту. Иногда целые ночи проходят незаметно в неописанных наслаждениях […] Он бросается на постель почти без памяти и, засыпая, еще долго слышит болезненно-приятное, физическое ощущение в сердце… Минуты отрезвления ужасны; несчастный их не выносит и немедленно принимает свой яд в новых, увеличенных дозах. Опять-таки книга, музыкальный мотив, какое-нибудь воспоминание давнишнее […] и яд готов, и снова фантазия ярко, роскошно раскидывается по узорчатой и прихотливой канве тихого, таинственного мечтания. На улице он ходит повесив голову, мало обращая внимания на окружающих, иногда и тут совершенно забывая действительность, но если заметит что, то самая обыкновенная житейская мелочь, самое пустое, обыденное дело немедленно принимает в нем колорит фантастический. Уж у него и взгляд так настроен, чтоб видеть во всем фантастическое. […]

Воображение настроено; тотчас рождается целая история, повесть, роман… Нередко же действительность производит впечатление тяжелое, враждебное на сердце мечтателя, и он спешит забиться в свой заветный, золотой уголок, который на самом деле часто запылен, неопрятен, беспорядочен, грязен. Мало-помалу проказник наш начинает чуждаться толпы, чуждаться общих интересов, и постепенно, неприметно, начинает в нем притупляться талант действительной жизни. Ему естественно начинает казаться, что наслаждения, доставляемые его своевольной фантазиею, полнее, роскошнее, любовнее настоящей жизни. Наконец, в заблуждении своем он совершенно теряет то нравственное чутье, которым человек способен оценить всю красоту настоящего, он сбивается, теряется, упускает моменты действительного счастья […] И не

> трагедия такая жизнь! Не грех и не ужас! Не карикатура! И не все мы более или менее мечтатели!... (18:32-34)

Such a depersonalised ‘существо’ is described almost verbatim in *Белые ночи*, in the shape of its narrator. He is a self-confessed *мечтатель* who himself attempts a detailed characterisation of the daydreamer. But by moving into a first-person perspective, Dostoevskii allows us to see first-hand the ‘трагедия’ of such a life. The narrator himself ultimately confesses that the way of life of the *мечтатель* is a negative one, ‘кошмар петербургский’.

‘Я мечтатель; у меня так мало действительной жизни’ (2:108), he admits, underlining the fact that the *мечтатель* has very little experience of reality. Much of his life is spent indoors, ‘isolated from cues about time or day’[27] and the world in general, where daydreams can be dreamt without interruption. Such is his alienation from reality that he seems to start losing human form:

> Селится он большею частию где-нибудь в неприступном углу, как будто таится в нем даже от дневного света, и уж если заберется к себе, то так и прирастет к своему углу, как улитка, или, по крайней мере, он очень похож в этом отношении на то занимательное животное, которое и животное и дом вместе, которое называется черепахой. (2:112)

The longer he remains in his corner, the more difficult it is for the *мечтатель* to be moved. He grows a hard shell like a snail or a tortoise that is very difficult to crack.

Yet the narrator of *Белые ночи* can still manage to drag himself out to go on frequent wanderings through the streets of St Petersburg, the buildings of which he has almost become personally acquainted with. His description of the fading of dreams – ‘В комнате потемнело; на душе его пусто и грустно; целое царство мечтаний рушилось вокруг него, рушилось без следа, без шума и треска, пронеслось, как сновидение, а он и сам не помнит, что ему грезилось’ (2:115) – echoes the ‘terrible minutes of sobering up’ (‘минуты отрезвления ужасны’, 18:33) in the feuilleton’s typology, and underlines the occasional impulse of the *мечтатель* to ‘feed’ his daydreams by contact with reality, with ‘самая обыкновенная житейская мелочь’ that can then assume ‘колорит фантастический’.

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[27] Rosenzweig et al, p. 432

But the narrator's character still harbours many of the negative aspects of *мечтательность*. He says, for example, that he is in love (*влюблен*) 'в идеал […] Я создаю в мечтах целые романы.' (2:107) Such idealism can only mean he is destined for disappointment in reality. In turn, the fear of this disappointment leads him back to the security of seeking out new dreams, new ways of attaining this 'идеал'; and so a vicious circle of delusion is activated. Every turn away from reality back into dreams, every surrender to this deluded world, reinforces this circle. It is no surprise that he describes his dreams as an addict would his drug of choice, 'яд' which induces 'болезненно-приятное, физическое ощущение в сердце':

> вдруг опять новый мир, новая, очаровательная жизнь блеснула перед ним в блестящей своей перспективе. Новый сон – новое счастие! Новый прием утонченного, сладострастного яда! О, что ему в нашей действительной жизни! […] Посмотрите на эти волшебные призраки, которые так очаровательно, так прихотливо, так безбрежно и широко слагаются перед ним в такой волшебной, одушевленной картине […] Посмотрите, какие разнообразные приключения, какой бесконечный рой восторженных грез. (2:115-6)

With such an evidently narcotic effect, it is little surprise that the *мечтатель* finds it so difficult to engage with reality. Yet he does desire experience, and is like many of Dostoevskii's 'герои' who, according to Mikhail Bakhtin, 'тщетно мечтают и жаждут воплотиться, приобщиться нормальному жизненному сюжету.'[28] For Bakhtin, this 'жажда воплощения' in Dostoevskii's protagonists is one of the author's great, recurring themes. Despite admitting to Nasten'ka that 'я даже и во сне не гадал, что когда-нибудь буду говорить хоть с какой-нибудь женщиной' the *мечтатель* admits that 'только мечтаю каждый день, что наконец-то когда-нибудь я встречу кого-нибудь' (2:107). His love of *мечты* cannot hide his loneliness or the futility of his situation. This futility is made most evident when the narrators of both the novella and feuilleton describe the *мечтатель* type as 'существо среднего рода' (2:112; 18:32): that is, sexless, impotent, ineffective, destined not to survive on an evolutionary, let alone social, basis. Yet, by recognising this trait within himself, the narrator of *Белые ночи* only perpetuates the vicious circle by simply accepting his situation. The *мечтатель* even seems to deny himself

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[28] М. Бахтин, *Проблемы поэтики Достоевского*, «Художественная литература», Москва 1972, p. 171

an identity or corporeal existence when, in recounting his life to Nasten'ka, he insists on using the third person when describing himself.

So the *мечтатель* is caught between the love of his daydreams and his desire to experience reality, while improbably desiring the former to inform the latter. His meeting with Nasten'ka starts to revise his fear of reality. Rather than something to be shied away from, reality is presented in a more familiar form through a spurned, naïve 17-year-old girl, in many ways herself a *мечтательница* due to her inexperience of life. In helping Nasten'ka through her dilemma, and ultimately falling in love with her himself, the *мечтатель* starts to realise that reality can offer more than his world of dreams: 'о чем мечтать будет мне, когда я уже наяву подле вас был так счастлив!' (2:118) he asks her rhetorically. In this case, experience has outweighed dreams. The *мечтатель* is waking up, confronting his malaise, his addiction to the 'яд' of daydreams. He continues: 'слышишь, видишь, как живут люди, – живут наяву, видишь, что жизнь для них не заказана, что их жизнь не разлетится, как сон, как видение, что их жизнь вечно обновляющаяся, вечно юная и ни один час ее непохож на другой' (2:118). He realises that real life, 'наяву', also offers adventures, experiences of 'обновление', but is more stable. Ultimately, *мечты* are worthless compared to reality, they are merely a 'глупый, круглый нуль' (2:119) – that selfsame vicious circle. He begins to see how he could live in reality.

These feelings are given further sustenance by Nasten'ka's apparent reciprocation of his love. After they part, the narrator finds himself in a very different frame of mind. It is in this interlude, before his hopes for happiness with Nasten'ka are dashed, that he experiences a moment of inspirational illumination, which helps us to further understand his growing awakening to reality. For a start, despite his obvious anticipation of their next rendezvous, there is a sudden, unusual, assured calmness in his tone:

> Я проснулся за час до нашего свидания, но как будто и не спал […] как будто одно ощущение, одно чувство должно было остаться с этого времени во мне навечно, как будто одна минута должна была продолжаться целую вечность и словно вся жизнь остановилась для меня … Когда я проснулся, мне казалось, что какой-то музыкальный мотив, давно знакомый, где-то прежде слышанный, забытый и

> сладостный, теперь вспоминался мне. Мне казалось, что он всю жизнь просился из души моей (2:129).

This sensation of time standing still is a powerful moment of reality for the *мечтатель*, whose life is usually in flux ('жизнь разлетится'). It signifies a moment of great awareness of the power of real emotion, an overwhelming affirmation that reality can outstrip the wildest *мечты*. As a result of this emotion, his real connection to another human, time seems to have stopped. We could almost say that he has fallen absolutely, naïvely in love; not just with Nasten'ka, but also with real life. He is, all of a sudden, for the first time, totally absorbed.

The element of music adds another factor. For whereas his *мечты* – some, indeed founded on music, as stated in the feuilleton – were all immediately recognisable, having been created in his own subconscious, the 'музыкальный мотив, давно знакомый, […] забытый и сладостный' he hears in his brain is indefinable: it seems to come out of nowhere; it has no real identity; yet at the same time it has a definite 'мотив', a theme that he can associate with, something almost primal that has always been within him and has only just at this moment been realised and set free.

This emotional episode of inspirational illumination carries an almost mythical power of deep insight and powerful awakening. It is almost like a conversion experience, the moment when the *мечтатель* gives up the world of daydreams for reality. Consequently, when Nasten'ka leaves him behind in favour of her long-lost suitor, the *мечтатель* finds he can no longer take solace in his world of *мечты*, at least not immediately. He has had a rude awakening: 'Мои ночи кончились утром' (2:139) just as dreams end with reality. He is now aware of reality all around about him, including 'лихорадка' which 'прокрадывалась по моим членам' (2:139), and his first faint feelings of mortality and the unstoppable march of time, refracted through the image of his ageing maid: 'мне вдруг представилось, что комната моя постарела так же, как и старуха. Стены и полы облиняли, все потускнело; паутины развелось еще больше' (2:140-41). The *мечтатель* has arrived at some crucial impasse, the conclusion to which we can only surmise. What we can be sure of is that he now absolutely recognises the futility of *мечтательность*: 'передо мною мелькнула так неприветно и грустно вся перспектива моего будущего, и

я увидел себя таким, как я теперь, ровно через пятнадцать лет, постаревшим, в той же комнате, так же одиноким' (2:141).

Perversely, this whole intense awakening to reality for the *мечтатель* is seen by Nasten'ka as completely the reverse. In her last letter to him, she writes: 'Это был сон, призрак…' (2:140) It is almost as if the *мечтатель* has been tricked by yet another of his daydreams, but one that was completely out of his control.

The text apparently ends on a positive note. The *мечтатель* seems to appreciate that his fateful encounter has given him a taste of real life, and a fleeting glimpse of happiness. Although this has been quashed by Nasten'ka's sudden departure, such emotions are more than he could have ever experienced in his dreams: 'Целая минута блаженства! Да разве этого мало хоть бы и на всю жизнь человеческую?..' (2:141)

However, it is uncertain whether he has actually been 'cured' from his addiction to dreams. The subtitle of the text – *Из воспоминаний мечтателя* – begs the question: where is the dreamer now? He has evidently survived his encounter with reality; yet the subtitle implies that all the narrator has to look back on are his dreams, punctuated by this one brush with reality. In the present from which he writes, he still refers to himself as a *мечтатель* as if he is still unable to escape his addiction, as if he is unable to describe himself any other way. Perhaps a 'cure' for his daydreaming was never really possible, and he is forever stuck in a decaying limbo. In this context, one cannot help feeling pessimistic for his outcome when Victor Terras writes that

> the existence of a romantic dreamer proves to be an extremely precarious one. It does not withstand the test of a brief realization of his dream world. The dreamer… is perched on the very edge of the abyss of non-existence, in the sense of an agonizing solipsism and a total absence of any meaning, goal, or distinctive content.[29]

It is here that an uglier proposition can be raised: that the *мечтатель* of the 1840s would evolve into the bitter man from underground of the 1860s, a view already expounded by some critics. Konstantin Mochul'skii, for example, describes *Записки*

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[29] Victor Terras. *The Young Dostoevsky (1846-1849) – A Critical Study*, Mouton, The Hague, 1969, pp. 74

из подполья and the twisted ethos of 'подполье' itself as 'естественное завершение «мечтательства»[30]. The Underground Man himself harbours similar wild fantasies to the narrator of *Белые ночи*; yet his experiences of reality have shown him that his lofty ideals can have no bearing in his mundane reality. He is left to sit ruminating, dreaming, and bemoaning his life, and occasionally he intersperses these with forays into the seedier side of reality. Ultimately, he is still trapped in the vicious circle of desiring to live while being afraid of life; but now the fear has turned to bitter disdain, aloofness and a neurosis that approaches megalomania: 'Only too ready to embrace mankind, he discovers that mankind would rather shake hands and keep a polite distance; and this rejection brings on the dialectic of vanity, with its accompanying duel for domination.'[31]

The *мечтатель* too may have gone on to have more experiences of reality, and with each disappointment the 'блаженство' he felt after Nasten'ka's departure may have turned to bitterness. Perhaps, too, he ended up sitting in his own 'underground', caustically examining his experiences while clinging to his daydreams.

Netochka Nezvanova

Another notable feature of the *мечтатель* as presented in *Белые ночи* is that he has no life story, no history. He simply lives on a day-to-day basis, conjuring new dreams to replace the old ones – the only recognisable history he has – which fade quickly from memory. The *мечтатель*, then, is only embodied in the present, and only lives in the present. His lack of past and little hope for the future leave him isolated in time, just as he is isolated in society.

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[30] К. Мочульский, *Достоевский – жизнь и творчество*, YMCA-Press, Paris, 1980, p. 202. This statement must be qualified by the fact that there are a great many 'last Romantic dreamers' in Mochul'skii's study; namely Vasia (*Дядюшкин сон*), Ivan Petrovich (*Униженные и оскорбленные*), Ivan Il'ich Pralinskii ('Скверный анекдот'), Raskol'nikov (*Преступление и наказание)*, Myshkin (*Идиот*), Vel'chaninov (*Вечный муж*), Stepan Verkhovenskii (*Бесы*), the narrator of 'Кроткая' and even Ivan Karamazov. This does, however, underline the consistency of the *мечтатель* typology in Dostoevskii's work. Robert Louis Jackson even suggests that *Записки из подполья* may be the deciphered form of the crazed, scribbled notes found alongside the memoirs of the convict-dreamer Gorianchikov that comprise *Записки из мертвого дома* (Robert Louis Jackson, *The Art of Dostoevsky – Deliriums and Nocturnes*. Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1981, p. 170).
[31] Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky – The Stir of Liberation 1860-1865*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1986, p. 339

Dostoevskii's other daydreamers, however, have a place in time and become embodied in a plot. In these cases we see how the dreamer is created and how such a character develops – although this must be qualified by the fact that most of Dostoevskii's daydreamers seem to be born into a dreamlike state. This is certainly true of the eponymous heroine of *Неточка Незванова*, Dostoevskii's last novel of the 1840s, unfinished due to his arrest and exile. Netochka herself says she remembers her childhood 'как будто во сне' (2:158) and that she recalls little before the age of nine. She remarks on 'темный и странный колорит на всё время житья моего у родителей, а вместе с тем – и на всё мое детство. Теперь мне кажется, что я очнулась вдруг, как будто от глубокого сна'. (2:159) Her very existence in these early days seems in question, a fact underlined by her very name: 'Nameless Nobody' might be the most pertinent English translation.

Netochka says in her narrative that, as a child, she was always 'trying to reach somewhere else in my dreams' ('всё чего-то добиваясь в мечтах моих', 2:164), in order to escape the insular drudgery of her home life with her often-absent stepfather and ill mother. Her daydreams, and indeed her experiential dreams (*сны*) become focused on the image of the nearby house with the red curtains, beyond which she thinks lies an idealised life for her and her stepfather (but not her mother, whom she fears): 'мне чудились эти звуки сладкой музыки, вылетавшие из окон; я всматривалась в тени людей, мелькавшие на занавесах окон, и всё старалась угадать, что такое там делается, – и всё казалось мне, что там рай и всегдашний праздник.' (2:163)

Netochka's lack of experience outside her insular, neglected, everyday life has resulted in an over-stimulated imagination that leads to unrealistic expectations of reality, to the degree that, when reality intervenes – for example, when her stepfather tells her he will teach her the alphabet – it immediately becomes confused with her dreams and daydreams. Her reaction upon hearing a fairy-tale for the first time is even more telling:

> я всё брала за истину, тут же давала волю своей богатой фантазии и тотчас же смешивала с вымыслом действительность. Тотчас являлся в воображении моем и дом с красными занавесами; тут же, неизвестно каким образом, являлся как действующее лицо и отец […] и матушка […] наконец […] я, с своими чудными мечтами, с

> своей фантастической головой, полной дикими, невозможными призраками, – всё это до того перемешалось в уме моем, что вскоре составило самый безобразный хаос, и я некоторое время потеряла всякий такт, всякое чутье настоящего, действительного и жила бог знает где. (2:165)

We can already see that Netochka has many of the characteristics of the *мечтатель* outlined in *Белые ночи* and Dostoevskii's early feuilleton. However, the theme is taken further here, as, in Netochka's parents, we see the potential outcomes for this type. Netochka's mother is afflicted with *мечтательность* – 'Как настоящая мечтательница, она не вынесла и первого шага в враждебной действительности' (2:155) – and dies poor and unhappy. Her alcoholic stepfather, Efimov, continually harbours *мечты* of becoming famous with his musical talent before he is driven to madness and death upon realising he has wasted it. Having been brought up in such a household, daughter to two such *мечтатели*, it is unsurprising that Netochka is the most voracious dreamer of all. She is only saved from her parents' outcome due to her fateful encounter with Prince Kh–ii, in front of whose house gates she collapses following the death of her mother and stepfather.

The final episode featuring Efimov is an extraordinarily powerful passage that has been curiously overlooked by critics. It focuses on a moment of inspirational illumination he experiences, which results in the great peripeteia of the text as it stands. As in the narrator's moment of inspirational illumination in *Белые ночи*, music is central.

Efimov, once a masterful violin player, has fallen destitute into alcoholism, partly due to a stubborn belief in his right not to work because of his natural talent. He no longer plays but is still allowed to attend concerts, the musicians at which he generally treats with condescension for their lack of skill. This, however, all changes when he witnesses a violin concert by 'знаменитый С–ц' and is suddenly awakened from his dreamlike state of assured superiority:

> С последним звуком, слетевшим со струн скрипки гениального С–ца, перед ним разрешилась вся тайна искусства, и гений, вечно юный, могучий и истинный, раздавил его своею истинностью. Казалось, всё, что только в таинственных, неосязаемых мучениях тяготило его во всю жизнь, всё, что до сих пор только грезилось ему и мутило его только в сновидениях, неощутительно, неуловимо, что хотя сказывалось ему по временам, но от чего он с ужасом бежал,

> заслонясь ложью всей своей жизни, всё, что предчувствовал он, но чего боялся доселе, – всё это вдруг, разом засияло перед ним, открылось глазам его, которые упрямо не хотели признать до сих пор свет за свет, тьму за тьму. Но истина была невыносима для глаз его, прозревших в первый раз во всё, что было, что есть, и в то, что ожидает его; она ослепила и сожгла его разум. Она ударила в него вдруг неизбежно, как молния. (2:188)

The power of music, again so nebulous and unidentifiable, has brought realisation to Efimov that his life has been a lie. It is a rude awakening, and one exacerbated when he returns home to find his wife, now the last person over whom he feels he can assert his superior genius, dead from her illness. It is at this point that he picks up his violin for the last time. The sound he produces, witnessed by Netochka who is hiding in the room, is extraordinary:

> Это были не звуки скрипки, а как будто чей-то ужасный голос загремел в первый раз в нашем темном жилище. Или неправильны, болезненны были мои впечатления, или чувства мои были потрясены всем, чему я была свидетельницей, подготовлены были на впечатления страшные, неисходимо мучительные, – но я твердо уверена, что слышала стоны, крик человеческий, плач; целое отчаяние выливалось в этих звуках, и наконец, когда загремел ужасный финальный аккорд, в котором было всё, что есть ужасного в плаче, мучительного в муках и тоскливого в безнадежной тоске, – всё это как будто соединилось разом … я не могла выдержать (2:184).

Efimov finds the only true expression for his despair is in music, and for the last time his genius is apparent in the almost-human wails of his violin. Such extreme emotion is deep-seated, seemingly from a primal region of the subconscious, and cannot be put into words. The imagery in this case is purely musical. Efimov's awful melody is the full, final expression of his soul, and his subsequent death seems inevitable: 'Он должен был так умереть, когда всё, поддерживавшее его в жизни, разом рухнуло, рассеялось как призрак, как бесплотная, пустая мечта.' (2:188) This is obviously another warning from Dostoevskii of living in *мечты* for the duration of one's life – the risk of sudden awakening to reality may be too big a shock for the body to bear. Efimov is 'a dreamer who, deprived of his dream, can no longer exist.'[32] He flees his home, his wife, his stepdaughter, his *мечты*, his life.

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[32] Terras, *The Young Dostoevsky*, p. 75

Netochka tries to run after Efimov but cannot keep up, and is found unconscious by Prince Kh–ii. The prince's patronage towards the orphan propels her from her former daydreams by compelling her to confront a different way of life, that is, of an affluent, educated family. The whole text suddenly shifts as a result of the peripeteia of Efimov's illumination and the death of Netochka's mother. Consequently, so do Netochka's *мечты*.

Her focus moves from the house with red curtains to a fixation with the prince's young daughter Katia, of whom she lives in awe: 'Она мне стала сниться во сне […] я сочиняла целые разговоры с ней […] мечтала об ней, как влюбленная' (2:197). Although she is literally dumbstruck in Katia's presence, and Katia initially treats her with haughty condescension, Netochka uses her imagination and daydreams to replace her lack of social skills and experience. Like the *мечтатель*, she feels safe in her imagination.

It is during her stay at Prince Kh–ii's that she also fulfils her first *мечта*: to see beyond the red curtains. The sequence takes place during her second period of illness, and is consequently informed by dreamlike imagery – so it may either be a fevered dream (*бред*) made extraordinarily vivid by her condition, or may have actually been experienced in a delirious, dreamlike haze. The sensuous imagery certainly suggests a dream: 'огромная мрачная зала […] сверкала теперь тысячью огней.

> Как будто море света хлынуло на меня, и глаза мои, привыкшие к темноте, были в первое мгновение ослеплены до боли. Ароматический воздух, как горячий ветер, пахнул мне в лицо. Бездна людей ходили взад и вперед; казалось, все с радостными, веселыми лицами. (2:195)

It could also be argued that, if actually experienced, this picture has been made more vivid by naïve childish impressions, further exaggerated by her ill condition and the novel's first-person reporting of past events. In any case this passage provides a moment of pure wish-fulfilment fantasy for Netochka, the first she has experienced in her life (beyond her desire for her mother's death, which left her racked with guilt). This realisation of her principal *мечта* is, in whatever subconscious form it takes, a confirmation that in this household she has found a place to realise her

dreams. It is also perhaps a subconscious expression of developing maturity, an indication that it is time for her to move on, to develop beyond her childish fantasies.

It is not long before her next great *мечта* – the aim of which already displays more maturity – is realised when she and Katia become firm friends. However, this is soon dispelled upon Katia's departure for Moscow, and Netochka is sent to the house of her sister, Alexandra Mikhailovna, to receive an education.

Despite the fact that Netochka has evidently matured, the *мечтательница* within her remains strong and influences events in the third section of the text. It is here that literature comes to play a key role in her life, as a source and outlet for her daydreams:

> Все новые потребности мои, все недавние стремления, все еще неясные порывы моего отроческого возраста, так беспокойно и мятежно восставшие было в душе моей, нетерпеливо вызванные моим слишком ранним развитием, – все это вдруг уклонилось в другой, неожиданно представший исход… Казалось, сама судьба остановила меня на пороге в новую жизнь… Мне суждено было пережить всю эту будущность, вычитав ее сначала из книг, пережить в мечтах, в надеждах, в страстных порывах, в сладостном волнении юного духа. (2:234)

Netochka's sudden immersion in literature is another moment of inspirational illumination for the dreamer in Dostoevskii's works. Her exposure to books stimulates a 'conflagration of the soul'[33], a great hunger to find some elusive meaning to her life, of which she finds echoes in their pages:

> в каждой книге, прочитанной мною, воплощались законы той же судьбы, тот же дух приключений, который царил над жизнию человека, но истекая из какого-то главного закона жизни человеческой […] Этот-то закон, подозреваемый мною, я и старалась угадать всеми силами, всеми своими инстинктами, возбужденными во мне почти каким-то чувством самосохранения. Меня как будто предуведомляли вперед, как будто предостерегал кто-нибудь. Как будто что-то пророчески теснилось мне в душу […] (2:234)

She even starts to relate the literature she reads to her childhood, as if it provides an answer to the lost days of her youth: 'Теперь же сознание как будто вдруг

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[33] Jacques Catteau, *Dostoyevsky and the process of literary creation* (trans. Audrey Littlewood), Cambridge University Press, 1989, p. 429

осветило для меня всю прошлую жизнь мою. Действительно, почти каждая страница, прочитанная мною, была мне уж как будто знакома, как будто уже давно прожита.' (2:234) Consequently, the past seems ever more dreamlike to Netochka. The novels she reads, including the romances of Scott that Dostoevskii himself loved, dig up elemental human feelings and describe extremes of human emotions which she has experienced in her childhood and which she can relate to. In her voracious appetite for literature, Netochka becomes immersed in dreamlike stories and tales, which are perfect sustenance for her inherent daydreaming nature. With each new tale she sees, in language mirroring that of the *мечтатель* of *Белые ночи*, 'новый мир, новая, очаровательная жизнь […] в блестящей своей перспективе […] волшебные призраки […] какие разнообразные приключения, какой бесконечный рой восторженных грез.' (2:115-6) The present for Netochka fades into vagueness: 'И как не завлечься было мне до забвения настоящего, почти до отчуждения от действительности'. (2:234)

She has returned to her world of daydreams, a world which she is captivated by and which she feels content in. Her new, more sheltered life with Aleksandra Mikhailovna and her husband has actually caused her to regress within herself again, after her contacts with reality in Prince Kh–ii's household. The rather more staid and solitary environment she finds herself in harks back to her insular childhood, where idle *мечты* ruled: 'я бессознательно положила довольствоваться покуда миром фантазии, миром мечтательности, в котором уже я одна была владычицей, в котором были только одни обольщения, одни радости, и самое несчастье […] играло роль пассивную, роль переходную' (2:234)

Dostoevskii's warning of straying too far into *мечты* is again clear as Netochka once again becomes slowly alienated from reality. However, as with the narrator of *Белые ночи*, reality intervenes: Netochka finds a secret letter in a volume of Scott from a lover of Aleksandra Mikhailovna, whose affair had been discovered and caused great scandal. Netochka is suddenly thrown back into the tangled web of reality, from the straightforward world of daydreams. 'Действительность поразила меня врасплох среди легкой жизни мечтаний' (2:244), she says. Yet she has difficulty accepting the fact:

> Когда же я проснулась наутро, первою мыслью моею было, что весь вчерашний вечер – чистый призрак, мираж, что мы только мистифицировали друг друга, заторопились, дали вид целого приключения пустякам и что все произошло от неопытности, от непривычки нашей принимать внешние впечатления. (2:248)

Netochka would much rather live in the world of idle *мечты* of which she is master. She desperately tries to cover up reality with another fantasy in a vain attempt to bury it completely. But this time she cannot escape the fact that she is complicit in reality, and her feelings that she must act.

It is at this point, however, that the text abruptly cuts off. We have little idea of what happens to Netochka in the future. From the evidence we have, however, we know that she is an inherent *мечтательница*, perhaps inescapably so. We can therefore surmise that her dreams and daydreams were to have further great effects upon the story of her life.

Childhood memories

Неточка Незванова introduces the aspect of early, childhood memories as another type of daydream. We recall that Netochka describes how pictures of her childhood appear ‘как будто во сне’ (2:158) and that they are shrouded in a ‘темный и странный колорит’ (2:159). The narrative itself, at this early stage at least, assumes a daydream-like quality due to the distance of memory, and the result of Netochka’s emerging consciousness as a child.

Childhood memories – which add another textual layer to the narrative – on the whole tend to assume a daydream-like role for many characters in Dostoevskii, not least in *Братья Карамазовы*. Even the narrator of the author’s final novel eloquently describes the hidden, yet universal, subconscious power of these memories: ‘Такие воспоминания могут запоминаться (и это всем известно) даже и из более раннего возраста, даже с двухлетнего, но лишь выступая всю жизнь как бы светлыми точками из мрака, как бы вырванным уголком из огромной картины, которая вся погасла и исчезла, кроме этого только уголочка.’ (14:18)

Alesha Karamazov can trace his memories back to a mere two years of age. His earliest memory is an intensely symbolic picture of her mother, the ‘кликуша’:

> он запомнил один вечер, летний, тихий, отворенное окно, косые лучи заходящего солнца […] в комнате в углу образ, пред ним зажженную лампадку, а пред образом на коленях рыдающую как в истерике, со взвизгиваниями и вскрикиваниями, мать свою, схватившую его в обе руки […] протягивающую его из объятий своих обеими руками к образу как бы под покров богородице… (14:18)

Such an emotionally and spiritually charged early memory may have even defined Alesha's fate in his close connection with the church, as other early memories confirm: 'Из воспоминаний его младенчества, может быть, сохранилось нечто о нашем подгородном монастыре, куда могла возить его мать к обедне.' (14:25) Indeed, Diane Oenning Thompson believes Alesha's memory-image itself is iconographic, 'reminiscent of iconographic images of the divine Mother and Child'[34], and, furthermore, that this memory 'has become an icon *for* Alyosha, a venerated image which can be evoked through repeated recollection… [It is] the founding hagiographic episode of his "life story".'[35]

In this way, these powerful, dreamlike memory images, experienced as daydreams – 'epiphanic moments of grace that can occur unexpectedly in human life'[36] – can influence characters throughout their life to a significant degree. Our earliest memories, in the way they shape our psychology, are in many instances the ones we remember and subconsciously heed most: 'Though very small in scale, they may, like seeds, become large and powerful in their long-range effects. Points of light may burst into radiant effulgence, a little corner may expand into a full fledged image.'[37]

Father Zosima, too, holds influential memories close to his heart, for example, those of his dying brother who influenced his path in life:

> Помню, однажды вошел я к нему один, когда никого у него не было. Час был вечерний, ясный, солнце закатывалось и всю комнату осветило косым лучом. Поманил он меня, увидав, подошел я к нему, взял он меня обеими руками за плечи, глядит мне в лицо умиленно, любовно; ничего не сказал, только поглядел так с минуту: «Ну, говорит, ступай теперь, играй, живи за меня!» […] А в жизни потом

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[34] Diane Oenning Thompson, *The Brothers Karamazov and the Poetics of Memory*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991, p. 78
[35] Ibid., p. 82
[36] Robin Feuer Miller, The Brothers Karamazov – *Worlds of the Novel*, Twayne Publishers, New York, 1992, p. 21
[37] Thompson, p. 76

много раз припоминал уже со слезами, как он велел жить за себя. (14:263)[38]

In Zosima's case, memory is the art form of experience, which allows him to illustrate his teachings with examples from real life – even after his death, as Alesha's hagiography of his life (which is, in itself, written from Alesha's memory of Zosima's lectures and conversations) proves. Zosima's other memories, of pleading forgiveness to the orderly he beat and the subsequent duel he forfeits, of the 'таинственный посетитель' who relates the tale of how he murdered, and even of his simple joy of studying the Bible, are just as instructive lessons in humility, hope and faith. In disseminating them, Zosima turns powerful memories into instructive tools that can be passed on to others through his teaching, and they become 'a human link'[39]. This aspect of memory can even be taken as the basis of Christian teaching: 'Since Christ no longer exists incarnate in the world, He can only be pre-existent in the memory, cultural, collective and individual. The continuity of the Christian method is held in texts, canonical, folkloric, apocryphal, and in communal traditions and rituals.'[40]

This 'link' of memory provides the whole novel with its structure, according to Thompson, who comments on how Dostoevskii himself singled out four passages as 'the most essential "culminating points" in his novel'[41]: books five and six – 'Pro и contra' and 'Руский инок' – and the chapters 'Кана галилейская' and 'Похороны Илюшечки'. Intense memory is central to all of these passages – 'they are profoundly involved with memory, cultural and individual'[42] – yet they do not form part of the novel's central plot, instead providing its ideological foundations, 'links' of memory that connect each character with the other.

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[38] Both Alesha's and Zosima's memories are set in rooms lit by a setting sun, one of Dostoevskii's favourite images, and perhaps symbolic of the imminent death of those characters they hold dear. For Thompson, 'The slanting rays of the setting sun are a visible symbol of the presence of divine Grace.' (p. 82) In addition, they further strengthen the idea of childhood memories as daydreams by imbuing them with a dreamlike colouring.
[39] George A. Panichas, *The Burden of Vision – Dostoevsky's Spiritual Art*, Gateway Editions, Chicago, 1985, p. 172
[40] Thompson, p. 65
[41] Ibid., p. 62
[42] Ibid.

Of these 'culminating points', the ultimate confirmation of Dostoevskii's belief in the power of childhood memories lies at the end of *Братья Карамазовы*, when Alesha gathers round Iliusha's memorial stone with a group of the young boy's friends. Dostoevskii, through Alesha, conveys the thesis that future strength of character is founded on happy memories, such as the memories of Iliusha that Alesha asks his friends to treasure, and their very gathering round the stone and its spirit of friendship.

> Memories and the very words used to express them become, literally, the seeds that, having died, bear fruit. … He forges here a unit of memory that is simultaneously a recollection, and the recollection of a recollection, and which will operate for them in the future as an even more densely layered and sustained recollection and meta-recollection.[43]

Robin Feuer Miller here shows how such memories become buried in the subconscious, and, consequently, partially underpin every future action and decision. Furthermore, in their powerful, daydream-like form, they can assume an almost mythic or even spiritual form: 'the process of a good, precious memory … is touched by God. … As a vehicle of grace in an Augustinian sense, it connects not only life and life but also life and eternity. It fuses the conscious and the unconscious.'[44] Character is shaped according to memory. This, then, is the tragedy of the children in what Dostoevskii dubbed the 'accidental families' of his contemporary society: the orphans and bastard children, those raised in squalor, those raised without love and hope.

Arkadii Dolgorukii

Such a child is Arkadii Dolgorukii, the eponymous *Подросток* of Dostoevskii's penultimate novel. It is therefore no surprise that memories of his childhood play a defining role in his life. He is the great daydreamer of Dostoevskii's post-Siberian period, and it again shows the importance of the *мечтатель* type to the author that Arkadii shares many of the attributes of the narrator of *Белые ночи*, and especially Netochka Nezvanova, even though he is created around 30 years later.

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[43] Miller, *Worlds of the Novel*, p. 133
[44] Panichas, pp. 175-76

In *Подросток*, Arkadii's daydreams as a child seem to initially unite not into one image (such as the house with red curtains) but one single purpose, what he calls his 'идея', namely, 'стать Ротшильдом' (13:66). Even still while not being explicitly detailed, corresponding images of wealth, power and influence are a given in such a pursuit – residing in what Arkadii refers to as his 'мечтательное царство' (13:14) – and also manifest themselves in episodes such as Arkadii's erotic *сон* of power over Katerina Akhmakova, and his dreams of gambling and winning money.

Like Netochka, this child's daydreams are a result of an unstable childhood, which has instilled in the young Arkadii a detachment from reality, a desire to escape it, and an unwillingness to accept it. Perhaps more graphically than any other of Dostoevskii's texts, *Подросток* shows how the *мечтатель* comes into being. Coming from a broken home and mercilessly teased and bullied at the school he is sent to, Arkadii recalls: 'Особенно счастлив я был, когда, ложась спать и закрываясь одеялом, начинал уже один, в самом полном уединении, без ходящих кругом людей и без единого от них звука, пересоздавать жизнь на иной лад.' (13:73) It is these different 'лады', arising from a desired detachment from reality, that give rise to the *мечтатель* type.

Arkadii is denied the chronically insular life of the narrator of *Белые ночи*, and to a lesser degree Netochka, as he has little choice but to live in reality. His daydreams are his one escape and even they are fleeting, so he must make the most of them. Ultimately the patterns of his daydreams coalesce into his grand *мечта*: 'Я и до нее жил в мечтах, жил с самого детства в мечтательном царстве известного оттенка; но с появлением этой главной и все поглотившей во мне идеи мечты мои скрепились и разом отлились в известную форму: из глупых сделались разумными.' (13:14-15)

Yet behind Arkadii's childhood daydreams of his grand *мечта* lies a greater yearning that ultimately usurps his ambitions of wealth: that of re-acquainting himself with his long-absent biological father Versilov (another echo of Netochka, who craves her stepfather's love). This can in fact be construed as Arkadii's overriding *мечта*, in that his curiosity about his father and his desire to one day prove himself before him informs his desire to be come rich. Arkadii's preoccupation

with Versilov is made patently clear: ‘я мечтал о нем все эти годы взасос […] Каждая мечта моя, с самого детства, отзывалась им: витала около него, сводилась на него в окончательном результате.’ (13:16) A stable life of happiness and mutual respect with his father becomes Arkadii’s idealised daydream-image.

Subsequently, as the novel progresses, many more of Arkadii’s actions are informed by his desire for acceptance by Versilov, rather than his desire to ‘become a Rothschild’. It is on such an overwhelming preoccupation that Dostoevskii founds his fundamental messages of the implications of the broken family unit. Katerina Akhmakova, who becomes the focus of another of Arkadii’s *мечты*, underlines this point by referring to Arkadii as a ‘бедный мальчик […] оставленном в чужих людах, и об уединенных его мечтах… Я слишком понимаю, как сложилась душа ваша’ (13:209).

Dostoevskii summed up his aim for the character of Arkadii in his *Дневник писателя* of January 1876, when discussing his plans for a novel about children. For the author, Arkadii seems to have already passed the stage of moral help, having been born and grown up a bastard child from an ‘accidental family’ (‘случайное семейство’):

> Но тут дитя уже вышло из детства и появилось лишь неготовым человеком, робко и дерзко желающим поскорее ступить свой первый шаг в жизни. Я взял душу безгрешную, но уже загаженную страшною возможностью разврата, раннею ненавистью за ничтожность и «случайность» свою и тою широкостью, с которою еще целомудренная душа уже допускает сознательно порок в свои мысли, уже дерзких и бурных мечтах своих, – всё это оставленное единственно на свои силы и на свое разумение, да еще, правда, на бога. Всё это выкидыши общества, «случайные» члены «случайных» семей. (22:7-8)

Accordingly, as Arkadii’s dream of his ‘идея’ becomes all-consuming, he starts to increasingly lose touch with reality. ‘Да, я мечтал изо всех сил и до того, что мне некогда было разговаривать’ (13:72), he admits, and adds, ‘я прямо вывожу, что, имея в уме нечто неподвижное, всегдашнее, сильное, которым страшно занят, – как бы удаляешься тем самым от всего мира в пустыню, и все, что случается, проходит лишь вскользь, мимо главного. Даже впечатления принимаются

неправильно. И кроме того, главное в том, что имеешь всегда отговорку.' (13:79)

This obsessive character trait of the *мечтатель* has grown in strength due to the dreamer's experience of reality. The fact that there is 'всегда отговорка' indicates that his single-mindedness means he could become a danger to others and himself in his quest to achieve that goal.

Although Arkadii is ultimately saved from the life of the *мечтатель* by the web of experiences he is drawn into – by the novel's end there is little mention of Rothschild, as Arkadii increasingly focuses on the dilemmas of his family and a blackmail plot involving Katerina Akhmakova – he is made aware that trying to realise one's obsessive *мечты* can be dangerous. This refers to not only his own *мечты* of wealth, recognition by his father, and his deeper desire for Katerina, but also the *мечты* of others in the novel.

Подросток is teeming with *мечтатели*. The theories ruminated over by Kraft, for example, seem to occupy him more than reality, and ultimately lead to his suicide. It takes effort to remove him from his thoughts: 'Он точно вдруг опомнился от какого-то сна, почти сконфузился.' (13:54) Trishatov, one of Lambert's 'dependents', is one of Dostoevskii's old romantic dreamers who has immersed himself in *мечты* – 'Я всё мечтаю, всё мечтаю; вся моя жизнь обратилась в одну мечту, я и ночью мечтаю' (13:353) – and, like Netochka Nezvanova, daydreams further through literature, in his case Dickens' *The Old Curiosity Shop*. He shows another potential outcome for the *мечтатель*: rather than becoming the bitter Underground Man, he simply retreats more and more within himself, becoming the 'улитка' or 'черепаха' 'среднего рода'.

Versilov himself has an over-riding *мечта* as well, and one he shares with his son: that of possessing Katerina Akhmakova. This *мечта* seems to be dispelled when he admits to feeling no bitterness upon receiving a letter from her stating that she intends to marry another man. The letter apparently wakes Versilov to reality: 'всё, что было в нем страсти, муки, исчезло разом, само собою, как сон, как двухлетнее наваждение.' (13:386) Versilov has apparently been living in a 'сон' for the whole novel – with its undoubted attendant images of a life together with

Katerina – but is now awake. However, Arkadii, quite correctly, does not quite fully believe this – 'Да и как же могло случиться, мелькнуло во мне вдруг, чтоб такое «двухлетнее наваждение» исчезло как сон, как чад, как видение?' (13:387) – and the novel's final events, in which Versilov saves Katerina Akhmakova from Lambert, bears out this delusion. Powerful *мечты* cannot be simply dispersed, such is the embodiment of intense obsessions within the mind.

An even better impression of just how much *мечты* inform the character of Arkadii can be gained by studying the extensive notes that exist for *Подросток*, and earlier sketches from the 1860s that reveal Dostoevskii's preoccupation with creating a character in the mould of his old *мечтатель*. For example, notes for a prospective novel called *Отцы и дети* contain mention of '*Тип мечтателя*' and tellingly add in parenthesis: 'Смотри в старых книжках.' (17:7)

Then there are Dostoevskii's sketches for a whole work called *Мечтатель* in which we see the daydreamer type with a more unstable edge: 'Неужели же вы думаете, что я бы мог жить, если б не мечтал. Да я бы застрелился, если б не это. Вот я пришел, лег и намечтал.' (17:8) The direct threat of mortality is introduced to the typology: the dreamer confronts the possibility of a life without dreams and rejects it in favour of death.

It is here that we also see the first biographical aspects of Arkadii Dolgorukii: 'Я вам расскажу одно впечатление моей 1-й молодости, – сказал он *с грустным лицом*', which is followed by 'Про отца' (17:8). Later notes for *Мечтатель* focus more on a Versilov-type character, who is tormented by 'стыд жить при жене, не будучи мужем' (17:9). There are hints of his wanting to reform, face up to a reckless past and become a better man, and this desire becomes manifest in his *мечты*: 'Но в душе всегда, вечно, вопрос (и прежде был) сквозь мечту: быть правдивым и честным, сметь быть правдивым и истинным, осмелиться принять *истину* со всеми последствиями.' Dostoevskii then notes a strong challenge to the *мечтатель*: 'Стряхнуть паралич мечтательности и стать человеком.' (17:9)

But ultimately, even in these notes, it is fully apparent that *мечтательность* is an incurable condition. Try as he might to live and react in the real world, this prototype of Versilov always reverts to the world of *мечты* and their images:

> «Я лгу и живу в мечтательном мире, хочу действительного».
>
> Насилует себя стать спасителем ребенка.
>
> Сначала насилует, а потом и непосредственно полюбил и рад, что может жизнь снова начать. Но тут же опять мечтает (и о ребенке), прикрашивая.
>
> Он мечтатель, но не идеалист, а с полным скептицизмом.

The notes continue: 'Самое *бытие* есть наслаждение, единственное, но бытие не вечно, я бегу этого вопроса и затыкаю уши мечтами.' (17:9)

Despite his 'скептицизм', the *мечтатель* once again denies mortality by 'plugging his ears with dreams'. He then increasingly denies reality by creating a dream from reality – in this case, happiness between himself and his wife:

> Между тем отношения между женою и им все больше закрепляются. Она любит его ужасно.
>
> А параллельно идет действительная жизнь […] и его втягивает и ее. Он все *портит*, всякую действительность мечтами.
>
> Но и *не портит*, а делает ее, да так еще, как ни один из людей, но, доделав, не привязывается к делу, а как будто с плеч долой, «оставьте в покое» и мечтать. (17:10)

The *мечтатель* dissociates himself from his *мечта* when he feels it has 'finished', so he can move on to his next dream. Even in these notes of the 1860s, the *мечтатель* has become a more dangerous, unstable character, with an ability to infect the lives of others (in the latter case the 'жена') and ultimately abandon them.

The notebooks for *Подросток* contain many different variations of the prototype-Arkadii's *мечты*: alongside mention of Rothschild, there are dreams of making money by shining shoes or by inventions; or alternatively becoming a great thinker, of showing up his teacher at school then moving to Paris, where 'дураков профессоров и академик[ов] раздавлю' (16:75); or becoming 'необитаемого острова властелин', a field marshal; or an 'Унгерн-Штернберг' (16:76), a contemporary railway pioneer. He has fantasies of earning the gratitude of women; and there is once again mention of the illuminating influence of literature that so affected Netochka Nezvanova: 'Меж тем другой мир книжный, Вальтер Скотт, мечтательный. Зажечь (мечта).' (16:180) This cascade of images supports the assertion that the idealised 'идея' is a form of imagery of the subconscious, perhaps even more so than the final text of *Подросток*.

What the notebooks stress about the Rothschild *мечта* in particular is its maximum gain for relative ease. Moreover, the protagonist falls back on this idea because he seems to recognise that he is no entrepreneur, nor is he remarkably intelligent. 'Его, главное, утешает в его системе наживы – бесталантность ее.' (16:46) This is later spelled out even more distinctly: 'Ротшильд. Копить – неестественно не нажить! Наконец, торжество бесталантливость и средины. Вот с чем я приехал.' (16:213)

The notebooks, however, spell out the inherent psychological dangers in the latter *мечта*, with even the dreamer's dreams warning of the consequences of wealth:

> В мечтаниях все идет прелестно и с силой, пока я один. Но чуть я разбогател, женился или возвратился к отцу, т. е. чуть я опять с людьми – все как-то слабело и смешивалось, ибо я, естественно, терял первенство, входил в общую колею, встречал, стало быть, тотчас же высших себе по красоте, уму, таланту, богатству и физической силе, а я иначе как первым себя представить не мог. (16:220)

This passage seems to indicate the danger of the isolation of dreams, and the alienation from society and reality that they cause. While working alone in his system, Arkadii is all-powerful, he is the master of his own world. But his end-goal cannot help but bring him back into contact with reality and, moreover, it is a reality he could not possibly equate with the modest one he knew before. Having attained the company of the elite, he has difficulty adjusting to the fact that he is not actually everyone's superior – a fact emphasised by his own recognition of his 'lack of talent and mediocrity'. In fact, even his father makes him feel inferior. He realises that there are other attributes besides wealth that have worth.

What is significant about this passage in the evolution of the *мечтатель* is that this realisation comes through the dreamer's selfsame dream of power. It is almost as if the *мечта* is turning in on itself, attempting to destroy itself for the good of the *мечтатель*. It is curious that such a technique was not used by Dostoevskii in the final draft of the novel, in which Arkadii mends his ways only when he realises the damage he has inflicted on his relationships with friends and family. The novel only fleetingly warns of the trappings of wealth by showing Arkadii dabbling in gambling,

entering into heavy debt, and using the people he loves – but all in a peculiarly detached manner of expression, particularly for a first-person text.

We could say that Dostoevskii chose real life as a teacher instead of the otherwise harmful *мечта*; that such lessons are best learned first-hand, through experience. But the warnings presented by *мечты* should certainly not be ignored, and perhaps Dostoevskii missed out on using a powerful form of subconscious presentiment here.

Dostoevskii

The aspect of daydreams in Dostoevskii's fiction is most tightly focused on the concept of the *мечтатель*, who is detailed and analysed to such a degree in *Белые ночи* that it is difficult to imagine its author did not share some of his traits. Yet Dostoevskii's accounts of his own dreamy character are mostly buried in the semi-fiction of his feuilletons of the 1840s. It is only through an unsigned article, written in 1861 for Fedor and Mikhail Dostoevskii's journal *Время*, that the opportunity to see Dostoevskii the *мечтатель* appears. *Петербургские сновидения в стихах и прозе* affords a more honest autobiographical backwards glance at the young writer's life in his early Petersburg years, during which he describes his myriad daydreams, typical of those of the *мечтатель*:

> Прежде в юношской фантазии моей я любил воображать себя иногда то Периклом, то Марием, то христианином из времен Нерона, то рыцарем на турнире, то Эдуардом Гляндeнингом из романа «Монастырь» Вальтер Скотта, и проч., и проч. И чего я не перемечтал в моем юношестве, чего не пережил всем сердцем, всей душою моей в золотых и воспаленных грезах, точно от опиума. Не было минут в моей жизни полнее, святее и чище. Я до того замечтался, что проглядел всю мою молодость, и когда судьба вдруг толкнула меня в чиновники, я… я… служил примерно, но только что кончу, бывало, служебные часы, бегу к себе на чердак, надеваю свой дырявый халат, развертываю Шиллера и мечтаю, и упиваюсь, и страдаю такими болями, которые слаще всех наслаждений в мире, и люблю, и люблю… и в Швейцарию хочу бежать, и в Италию, и воображаю перед собой Елисавету, Луизу, Амалию. (19:70)

Such a blur of Romantic heroes and heroines is the very epitome of the 'carnivalesque' mode identified by Bakhtin. Consequently, this moment of artistic awakening for Dostoevskii 'родилось как бы из яркого карнавального видения

жизни'[45]. Here we can see clear inspiration for the pseudo-narcotic fantasies of the *мечтатель* of *Белые ночи*. The intensity of Dostoevskii's feelings, preserved up to 20 years later, is clear.

However, it is the vitality and the romantic visions of youth depicted in this passage that also signal a caution in treating some of its events too seriously. At times, the article's usefulness as a factual document comes into question, particularly when the narrator/Dostoevskii begins to tell of his relationship with a 'настоящая Амалия', with whom he shares a room (amongst others) and reads literature. The whole episode is highly fanciful, with more than a few inherent traces of *Бедные люди* and *Белые ночи*. Indeed, no other mention of this Amalia (or Nadia as Dostoevskii claims her real name is) is made by the author or any of his acquaintances.

But such a fabrication does again succeed in displaying the heightened states of *мечтательность* the young Dostoevskii may have occasionally found himself in through his passion for literature, which had been present since childhood and, in fact, never seemed to leave him. As he writes in another strikingly frank admission later on in the article:

> Я ведь никак не могу отказаться от фантастического настроения. Еще в сороковых годах меня называли и дразнили фантазером. Тогда, впрочем, я не пролез в одну щелочку. Теперь, разумеется, – седина, житейская опытность и т.д., и т.д., а между тем я все-таки остался фантазером. (19:73)

The author himself admits that dreaminess, *мечтательность*, is inherent within him; and by extension his works, from his very first to his very last – evident in the presence of *мечтатели* in his works from Devushkin to Kalganov.

More proof of Dostoevskii's status as 'фантазер' lies in his time as a convict in Siberia. In fact, it could be argued that daydreaming was one of the main reasons the writer managed to survive the whole experience. By allowing his mind to make associations and draw pictures and scenarios – mostly inspired by memories – he was able to block out the horrors of the prison camp, as well as keep his artistic mind active in the four-year absence of pen and paper. These daydreams are effectively

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[45] Бахтин, p. 276

what kept Dostoevskii sane. He describes his thought processes in 'Мужик Марей', in the *Дневник писателя* of February 1876:

> Начиналось с какой-нибудь точки, черты, иногда неприметной, и потом мало-помалу вырастало в цельную картину, в какое-нибудь сильное и цельное впечатление. Я анализировал эти впечатления, придавал новые черты уже давно прожитому и, главное, поправлял его, поправлял беспрерывно, в этом состояла вся забава моя. (22:47)

This explains why Dostoevskii describes convicts as dreamers in *Записки из мертвого дома*: it is an assumption that every prisoner had to dream to some degree to preserve their sanity. The *мечта* each one yearns for is freedom, a desire convicts found difficult to contain within their subconscious. In many prisoners, this desire for freedom, for space, for self-expression, would erupt into violence for no good cause, even if that convict had been previously well-behaved for months or years. Dostoevskii writes:

> А между тем, может быть, вся-то причина этого внезапного взрыва в том человеке, от которого всего менее можно было ожидать его, – это тоскливое, судорожное проявление личности, инстинктивная тоска по самом себе, желание заявить себя, свою приниженную личность, вдруг появляющееся и доходящее до злобы, до бешенства, до омрачения рассудка, до припадка, до судорог. (4:67)

Other isolated mentions of lesser daydreams abound in Dostoevskii's correspondence. Most concern his longing for his second wife Anna Grigor'evna when they are apart, or a desire to see his homeland again during his period of self-imposed exile in Europe.

There is also one mention of a consistent, obsessive *мечта* tied to his gambling addiction; perhaps the only *мечта* that the author pursued to a similar intensity as the Arkadii/Versilov character makes plain in the notebooks for *Подросток*. Although Dostoevskii would have by no means killed himself for this *мечта* of making millions at the roulette wheel, he came close by financially crippling himself and Anna while in Europe. Gambling assumed an all-consuming *мечта* for Dostoevskii at the times of his greatest financial need; this was, in turn, tied to the financial responsibilities the author took on following the death of his brother Mikhail, of his family and the brothers' debt-mired journal. He admits as much in a letter to Anna in which he vows that he has gambled for the last time. He writes:

‘Десять лет (или, лучше, с смерти брата, когда я был вдруг подавлен долгами) я всё мечтал выиграть. Мечтал серьезно, страстно.’ (29/1:199)

This indeed is partial explanation for Dostoevskii’s gambling addiction. It shows that he knew how obsessive *мечтательность* could become, and the dangers of following such paths: for instead of solving anything, Dostoevskii’s *мечта* of gambling only made his financial burdens worse.

Dostoevskii, like Arkadii Dolgorukii, also gave in to powerful spells of infatuation. The most prominent case, of his desire for Apollinariia Suslova, led him to travel around Europe trying to cater to her every desire. His courting of his first wife, Mariia Dmitrievna, was similarly intense, involving long journeys to the remote Siberian town where her first husband had been posted and died, purely to fend off the advances of other suitors and to prove his worth to her. Both of these cases of extreme infatuation led to failure, even in Mariia Dmitrievna’s case, for their marriage quickly degenerated into mutual tolerance and ultimately estrangement. This experience perhaps informs the ultimate failure of Arkadii’s naive *мечта* of possessing Katerina Akhmakova.

Despite Dostoevskii’s open confession, and blatant evidence, that he was a *мечтатель* for practically his whole life, it is clear he was intent on detailing that life’s shortcomings as well as its enchantment. Although Dostoevskii’s feuilleton of 1847, which provided the basis for *Белые ночи*, can only be classed as a semi-fiction, the fact that it is disparaging of the life of the *мечтатель* cannot be ignored. *Мечтательность* is castigated as a bad example of how to live life, despite the assertion that such attributes are inherent in all of us. Living as a *мечтатель*, Dostoevskii seems to say, is an absolute last refuge for those unable to cope with life; such is its tragedy.

This danger to the individual can be extended to a much wider scale. Joseph Frank places Dostoevskii’s portrayal of the *мечтатель* in the context of a series of contemporary reactions against ‘high-flown Romanticism’, which was seen as ‘a congenital malady of the Russian intelligentsia’ by radical writers such as Herzen and Belinskii, and in the young Goncharov’s *Обыкновенная история* (1847). ‘Everywhere one turns in Russian culture of the mid-1840s, one finds evidence of

this campaign,' writes Frank. 'High-flown Romantic ideals and attitudes are denounced as leading to a debilitating withdrawal from the world and the cultivation of a purely passive and self-satisfied attitude of exalted contemplation.'[46] *Мечтательность*, then, is not only a danger to the individual, but to society and the state as a whole, in its 'debilitating withdrawal' of the nation's elite talents. Such a message can in fact be gauged from Dostoevskii's feuilleton of June 15, 1847, in which dreamers are labelled as weak, feminine and impotent, with no aptitude for formality or work in the civil service. They are 'imprisoned by their solitude and paralysed by their inertia', writes Jacques Catteau, and cannot embrace reality despite their desire to, locked as they are in the vicious circle of *мечтательность*: 'the tragic dialectic of desire, a feeling of guilt which becomes more and more remote from its social origin, and the sterile idealism of the Schillerian dreamer are its three main elements. The impotence of the hero is the constant.'[47] Frank makes Dostoevskii's message more implicit: 'Whether or not he considers himself to be (or to have been) a "dreamer", Dostoevsky makes clear that the time has come for the intelligentsia to stop nourishing itself on such dreams and to turn to the enormous tasks confronting them in Russian life.' [48] There is already an indication here of the nationalism that was to seize such a hold in Dostoevskii's later life, indicative in the responsibility he felt each and every citizen should bear towards his country.

Donald Fanger extends this argument even further by laying blame back on the state. He senses a desire in these dreamers to make a difference, 'to find some worthy and useful employment' – but it goes untapped,

> a way is not offered: the social machine rolls on in its inertia, and no appeal is made to the available reserves of idealistic energy. The result is 'a Petersburg nightmare' … Fantasy replaces life for the dreamer, Dostoevsky says, until 'he loses completely that moral sensitivity by which a man is able to value all the beauty of the present'.[49]

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[46] Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky – The Seeds of Revolt, 1821-1849*, Princeton University Press, 1976, p. 234
[47] Catteau, p. 220
[48] Frank, *The Seeds of Revolt*, p. 236
[49] Donald Fanger, *Dostoevsky and Romantic Realism – A study of Dostoevsky in relation to Balzac, Dickens and Gogol,* Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1965, pp. 146-47

While this is an interesting, negative development of the function of the *мечтатель* in Dostoevskii's writings, it cannot be denied that the author himself succumbed to such a way of life. It is therefore difficult to agree with Frank's assertion that 'the significance that he assigns to the type in his feuilleton is inspired by the dominant social-cultural situation'[50], while reserving his own experience of *мечтательность* for his fiction. Dostoevskii's measured (and never explicit) condemnation of 'dreaminess' in the 1847 feuilleton is actually another reason we must take it as semi-fiction in its most believable degree. Although Fanger overstates the fact that the feuilleton 'is plainly a personal confession', it is beyond doubt that Dostoevskii was himself a *мечтатель*.

This becomes even more apparent when we consider that Dostoevskii's account of his 'vision' on the River Neva in *Петербургские сновидения в стихах и прозе* stands as perhaps the most vivid example we have of the author's own experience of inspirational illumination. It is best to quote the passage in full, to give an impression of the vivid gravitas the writer lends to this moment.

> Помню, раз, в зимний январский вечер, я спешил с Выборгской стороны к себе домой. Был я тогда еще очень молод. Подойдя к Неве, я остановился на минутку и бросил пронзительный взгляд вдоль реки в дымную, морозно-мутную даль, вдруг заалевшую последним пурпуром зари, догоравшей в мглистом небосклоне. Ночь ложилась над городом, и вся необъятная, вспухшая от замерзшего снега поляна Невы, с последним отблеском солнца, осыпалась бесконечными мириадами искр иглистого инея. Становился мороз в двадцать градусов… Мерзлый пар валил с усталых лошадей, с бегущих людей. Сжатый воздух дрожал от малейшего звука, и, словно великаны, со всех кровель обеих набережных подымались и неслись вверх по холодному небу столпы дыма, сплетаясь и расплетаясь в дороге, так что, казалось, новые здания вставали над старыми, новый город складывался в воздухе… Казалось, наконец, что весь этот мир, со всеми жильцами его, сильными и слабыми, со всеми жилищами их, приютами нищих или раззолоченными палатами, в этот сумеречный час походит на фантастическую, волшебную грезу, на сон, который в свою очередь тотчас исчезнет и искурится паром к темно-синему небу. Какая-то странная мысль вдруг зашевелилась во мне. Я вздрогнул, и сердце мое как будто облилось в это мгновение горячим ключом крови, вдруг вскипевшей от прилива могущественного, но доселе

[50] Frank, *The Seeds of Revolt*, p. 236

> незнакомого мне ощущения. Я как будто что-то понял в эту минуту, до сих пор только шевелившееся во мне, но еще осмысленное как будто прозрел во что-то новое, совершенно в новый мир, мне незнакомый и известный только по каким-то темным слухам, по каким-то таинственным знакам. Я полагаю, что с той именно минуты началось мое существование… Скажите, господа: не фантазер я, не мистик я с самого детства? Какое тут происшествие? что случилось? Ничего, ровно ничего, одно ощущение, а прочее всё благополучно. (19:69)

Although the fantastic imagery and romantic sweep of the passage may suggest that it suffers from the embellishments of the article as a whole, such dwelling on a single moment suggests strongly that Dostoevskii actually experienced it along with these sensations. What we do know from Dostoevskii's life is that at some point in his first years in St Petersburg he did make a literary break from the Romantic fiction of Byron, Scott and particularly Schiller[51]; at least, enough of a break to enable him to write on the more realistic, social level of his first novel *Бедные люди*.

A further clue as to why this change occurred can be found in an early letter to his brother Mikhail, in which he complains about a loss of inspiration:

> Брат, грустно жить без надежды… Смотрю вперед, и будущее меня ужасает […] Я давно не испытывал взрывов вдохновенья […] Те мысли, которые лучами своими зажигали душу и сердце, нынче лишились пламени и теплоты; или сердце мое очерствело или… дальше ужасаюсь говорить… Мне страшно сказать, ежели всё прошлое было один золотой сон, кудрявые грезы… (28/1:54)

The loss of such youthful inspirational illumination is likely a result of his recent move to the realities of the big city, the consequent loss of his childhood, and his enrolment at engineering college – against his wishes but at his father's demand. The latter most of all must have at least partially stifled his Romantic literary leanings instead of encouraging them, as he probably thought the city of Pushkin might.

But the sprawling panorama of life that he witnessed from the Nikolaevskii Bridge at dusk on a crisp winter's night provided him with a different, more contemporary inspiration. Dostoevskii uses this passage in *Петербургские сновидения* to introduce the fantastic aura of St Petersburg into his piece; but it is also clear that this

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[51] Dostoevskii wrote to his brother at the turn of 1840: 'Я вызубрил Шиллера, говорил им, бредил им […] имя же Шиллера стало мне родным, каким-то волшебным звуком, вызывающим столько мечтаний' (28/1:69).

‘vision’ had a lasting effect on the young writer. He writes: ‘И вот с тех пор, с того самого видения (я называю мое ощущение на Неве видением) со мной стали случаться всё такие странные вещи.’ (19:69) He adds:

> И стал я разглядывать и вдруг увидел какие-то странные лица. Всё это было странные, чудные фигуры, вполне прозаические, вовсе не Дон Карлосы и Позы, а вполне титулярные советники. Кто-то гримасничал передо мною, спрятавшись за всю эту фантастическую толпу, и передергивал какие-то нитки, пружинки, и куколки эти двигались, а он хохотал и всё хохотал! И замерещилась мне тогда другая история, в каких-то темных углах, какое-то титулярное сердце, честное и чистое, нравственное и преданное начальству, а вместе с ним какая-то девочка, оскорбленная и грустная, и глубоко разорвала мне сердце вся их история. (19:71)

It is clear from this passage that Dostoevskii’s ‘видения’ has opened his eyes for the first time to the fantastic nature of reality. The Romantic figures of Schiller are replaced by ordinary titular councillors, the twists and turns of whose lives are perhaps just as fantastic; and the ‘история’ he imagines clearly refers to *Бедные люди*. Yet the idea that someone is pulling these characters’ strings behind the scenes is curious; we can only assume someone has planted the seeds for Dostoevskii’s flowering of talent, which was triggered by the ‘видения’. This influence was probably that of Gogol’, who was the first in Russian literature to effectively portray the downtrodden civil servant as a protagonist. But the impact of the ‘masquerade’ of characters in Dostoevskii is different to Gogol’’s not-infrequent humiliation of them – Dostoevskii takes pity, as he did with Devushkin in *Бедные люди*.

Петербургские сновидения therefore provides a flipside to the dreamlike atmosphere of the capital, one that manifested itself in Dostoevskii’s subconscious in a moment of inspirational illumination and, it could be suggested, made him the author he is today. His ‘vision on the Neva’ has come to symbolise the modification of his romantic outlook on life with a newfound appreciation of the complexity of life around him, the social injustices of the modern world, and ultimately the potential for inspiration that the city possesses. Consequently, this passage provides a major source of the awakenings to reality that Dostoevskii’s *мечтатели* experience. Its importance to the author is evident in that the vision about which he is writing in 1861 took place in the 1840s; and appears three times in his works, in different forms, in ‘Слабое сердце’ (1848), *Преступление и наказание* (1866) and

Подросток (1874). This very fact indicates, like the consistent appearance of the *мечты* of the *мечтатель* in his works, the power that such imagery holds for Dostoevskii. Each episode is a moment of deep understanding, of revelatory insight. Each character in each of these visions, including Dostoevskii himself in *Петербургские сновидения*, seems to be moved to a higher, objective standpoint which brings the chaos around them into clarity. The 'vision on the Neva' is, as Henry Buchanan writes, a 'transcendental experience':

> Each character experiences the poetic ambience of the river Neva as a form of consciousness higher and more sublime than their ordinary intellect; each character experiences it as a non-verbal language of the soul which allows them to 'think' in a different language and to 'speak' to themselves in a different voice; for Dostoevsky and his characters the gaze on the waters of St Petersburg is a truly transcendental experience, one which bares the secrets of the soul.[52]

The version in the short story 'Слабое сердце' is perhaps the most powerful account, almost verbatim as it is to Dostoevsky's near-factual feuilleton. The vision of the story's protagonist, Arkadii, occurs following his friend Vasia's final decline into madness: on his way home, Arkadii stares out over the Nikolaevskii Bridge as Dostoevskii did.

> Казалось, наконец, что весь этот мир, со всеми жильцами его […] в этот сумеречный час походит на фантастическую, волшебную грезу, на сон, который в свою очередь тотчас исчезнет и искурится паром к темно-синему небу. Какая-то странная дума посетила осиротелого товарища бедного Васи. Он вздрогнул, и сердце его как будто облилось в это мгновение горячим ключом крови, вдруг вскипевшей от прилива какого-то могучего, но доселе не знакомого ему ощущения. Он как будто только теперь понял […] отчего сошел с ума его бедный, не вынесший своего счастия Вася. Губы его задрожали, глаза вспыхнули, он побледнел и как будто прозрел во что-то новое в эту минуту… (2:48)

Arkadii seems to sense the social injustices inherent in tsarist St Petersburg, injustices that have claimed his friend's sanity after he could not cope with his own happiness – such was the struggle of poorer clerks at this time. Yet these injustices are shrouded in the fragile, dreamlike appearance of St Petersburg in winter, seemingly in danger of dissipating at any moment; the 'magical city' built in the air

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[52] Henry Buchanan, *Dostoevsky's* Crime and Punishment – *An Aesthetic Interpretation*, Astra Press, Nottingham, 1996, p. 11

seems no less real. It is a charade that has fooled Arkadii until this point, when he seems to awaken to the reality of the situation. The 'горячий ключ крови' that he experiences, the moment he 'прозрел во что-то новое' is a realisation that man has forfeited happiness for status – and in a great number of cases survival. In his friend Vasia's case, sanity is forfeit.

This is all brought home to Arkadii upon looking at a panorama of the city, which in the winter dusk seems to threaten to dissipate into the freezing air. So it was for Dostoevskii, who, witnessing the same panorama from the Nikolaevskii Bridge, suddenly acknowledged that the naïve romanticism he had grown up with would always be dashed in reality. As a consequence, the *мечтатели* he would go on to portray must make the choice to face up to reality or be destroyed by it.

Fittingly, the remainder of *Петербургские сновидения* mostly details Dostoevskii's imaginings about certain characters he meets on Petersburg streets; but the action has shifted from the 1840s to the present day of the 1860s, proving that the power of the 'vision' is still with the writer; indeed, it may be valid to say that without such a vision, Dostoevskii may have never reached the peaks of fantastic realism that he achieved in his later works.

Dostoevskii also undoubtedly experienced many moments of inspirational illumination while composing his works. The notebooks for his later novels in particular show the often tortuous changes his masterpieces went through before the final version was written, and also reveal flashes of corresponding inspiration. *Идиот*, in particular, went through multiple different plans before even the basic characters were settled. Even the central character is a basic sketch known only as 'Идиот' by the sixth plan. But towards the end of this plan a sudden note states boldly, 'Он *князь*. Князь Юродивый (он с детьми)?!' (9:200), as if inspiration has suddenly struck. The second instance of the word 'князь' is written in large, ornate calligraphy, as if to further denote the idea's importance.

It was during the arduous process of writing this novel – Dostoevskii was abroad and he suffered frequent debilitating epileptic attacks during its composition – that he wrote a letter to Apollon Maikov detailing at length how such flashes of brilliance usually appear to him.

> Это тем более казалось мне вероятнее, что и всегда в голове и в душе у меня мелькает и дает себя чувствовать много зачатий художественных мыслей. Но ведь только мелькает, а нужно полное воплощение, которое всегда происходит нечаянно и вдруг, но рассчитывать нельзя, когда именно оно произойдет; и затем уже, получив в сердце полный образ, можно приступить к художественному выполнению. Тут уже можно даже и рассчитывать без ошибки. (28/2:239-245)

Dostoevskii's literary inspiration was often lyrical and epic in scope, as is evidenced by some occasions when he seemed to reel off captivating stories extemporaneously to guests or hosts. His relation of the occurrence of his first epileptic fit, told to his niece Sof'ia Kovalevskaia, is one example: for a start, its factual value is extremely limited; but he was seized by such inspiration with this account, Kovalevskaia recalls, that it was feared he might have an attack there and then. N. Fon-Fokht was another witness to Dostoevskii's ability to conjure up apparently off-the-cuff pictures and stories for other people's, and, indeed, his own amusement:

> Иногда он нарочно рассказывал что-нибудь фантастическое, невероятное и тогда воспроизводил удивительные картины, с которыми потом слушатель долго носился в уме. Одна из дочерей А. П. Иванова … была большая трусиха. Федор Михайлович это хорошо знал и нарочно рассказывал ей на сон грядущий такие страшные и фантастические истории, от которых бедная Мария Александровна не могла подолгу заснуть. Федора Михайловича это ужасно забавляло.[53]

It seems that Dostoevskii was also occasionally seized by inspiration in his correspondence. One extraordinary letter to A. N. Maikov details his grand scheme for a series of epic mythical poems on Russian history. It ought to be quoted at length, firstly for its imaginative theory on the poet and poetry; secondly, for its strikingly unusual subject matter and form; and thirdly, for Dostoevskii's excited tone, as if one concept is leading on to another and ideas are exploding out of other ideas.

> идея моя состояла тогда в том […] что мог бы появиться […] ряд былин (баллад, песней, маленьких поэм, романсов, как хотите назовите; тут уж сущность и даже размер стихов зависят от души поэта и являются вдруг, совершенно готовые в душе его, даже

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[53] К. Тюнькин (ed.), *Ф. М. Достоевский в воспоминаниях современников*, 2, Художественная литература, Москва, 1990, p. 53

независимо от него самого…) Сделаю отступление значительное: поэма, по-моему, является как самородный драгоценный камень, алмаз, в душе поэта, совсем готовый, во всей своей сущности, и вот это первое дело поэта *как создателя и творца*, первая часть его творения. Если хотите, так даже не он и творец, а жизнь, могучая сущность жизни, бог живой и сущий, совокупляющий свою силу в многоразличии создания *местами*, и чаще всего в великом сердце и в сильном поэте, так что если не сам поэт творец (а с этим надо согласиться, особенно Вам как знатоку и самому поэту, потому что ведь уж слишком цельно, окончательно и готово является вдруг из души поэта создание), – если не сам он творец, то, по крайней мере, душа-то его есть тот самый рудник, который зарождает алмазы и без которого их нигде не найти. Затем уж следует *второе* дело поэта, уже не так глубокое и таинственное, а только как художника: это, получив алмаз, обделать и оправить его. (Тут поэт почти только что ювелир.) Ну так вот, в этом ряде былин, в стихах (представляя себе эти былины, я представлял себе иногда Ваш «Констанцский собор») – воспроизвести, с любовью и с *нашею мыслию*, с самого начала с русским взглядом, – всю русскую историю, отмечая в ней те точки и пункты, в которых она, временами, и местами, как бы сосредоточивалась и выражалась вся, вдруг, во всем своем целом. Таких всевыражающих пунктов найдется, во все тысячелетие, до десяти, даже чуть ли не больше. Ну вот схватить эти пункты и рассказать в былине, *всем и каждому*, но не как простую летопись, нет, а как сердечную поэму, даже без строгой передачи факта (но только с чрезвычайною ясностию), схватить главный пункт и так передать его, чтоб видно, с какой мыслию он вылился, с какой любовью и мукою эта мысль досталась. Но без эгоизма, *без слов от себя*, а наивно, как можно *наивнее*, только чтоб одна любовь к России била горячим ключом – и более ничего. (29/1:38-39)

He ends with an almost apocalyptic flourish: ‘России через два столетия, и рядом померкшей, истерзанной и оскотинившейся Европы, с ее цивилизацей. Я бы не остановился тут *ни перед какой фантазией*…’ (29/1:41)

Such a grandiose scheme would undoubtedly have been the ultimate summation of Dostoevsky’s conservative patriotism of his later years. Yet nothing of the sort was ever written, perhaps understandably, given the size and scope of its undertaking. It seems to be part of the tragedy about Dostoevskii and other writers of equally imaginative stature that, despite their undisputed literary talent and craft, they can only hope to convey a fraction of whatever inspiration illuminates their minds.

Following Dostoevskii’s ‘vision on the Neva’, the next pivotal moment of inspirational illumination in Dostoevkii’s life was his ‘conversion’ in the prison

camp, a result of his constant daydreaming which conjured up the memories of his father's *мужик* Marei from a hidden corner of his psyche. This daydream, perhaps modified by the 'new touches' Dostoevskii admitted he applied to such mental wanderings, became the inspiration for his new philosophy of life, of seeing the Russian *народ* in a whole new light.

The moment of this conversion is detailed in 'Мужик Марей', in the *Дневник писателя* of February 1876. What the writer finds remarkable about the memory is that it was not one he actively remembered from time to time; it was as if it came to him from a remote corner of his psyche, purely in order to precipitate his change in opinion of the Russian soul. In his notebooks of 1876 he writes: 'Марей. Картинка из детства, я об ней не думал, т. е. не забывал я, но раз, потом, долго спустя – о какое, мне снятся, и часто – и вдруг вспомнился Марей, право, иные детские картинки дают возможность посмотреть совсем иначе.'[54]

He fleshes these sketches out in the prologue to 'Мужик Марей', as he describes how the image, amid a myriad other memories, came to him while he was lying down in the convicts' bunkhouse pretending to sleep:

> Мало-помалу я и впрямь забылся и неприметно погрузился в воспоминания. Во все мои четыре года каторги я вспоминал беспрерывно всё мое прошедшее и, кажется, в воспоминаниях пережил всю мою прежнюю жизнь снова. Эти воспоминания вставали сами, я редко вызывал их по своей воле. Начиналось с какой-нибудь точки, черты, иногда неприметной, и потом мало-помалу вырастало в цельную картину, в какое-нибудь сильное и цельное впечатление. Я анализировал эти впечатления, придавал новые черты уже давно прожитому и, главное, поправлял его, поправлял беспрерывно, в этом состояла вся забава моя. … я особенно любил тогда воспоминания из самого первого моего детства. (22:47)

The point must here be raised that such embellishment may have also been applied to the story of Marei; and if so these refinements bring into question the tale's authenticity. The young Dostoevskii's aural hallucination of hearing a warning cry of 'wolf', and Marei's comforting words may have been stylistic touches added to this memory by a frustrated writer who had no other means to indulge in his craft in

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[54] In *Литературное наследство*, 83: *Неизданный Достоевский – Записные книжки и тетради 1860-1881 гг.* (eds. И. С. Зильберштейн и Л. М. Розенблюм), Наука, 1971, p. 411

prison; and by the time of the writer's later years, in which he wrote his *Дневник*, these embellishments may have become 'fact'. However, it is clear that even the essence of the memory had a profound influence on Dostoevskii. In addition, all memories must naturally suffer from slight embellishments over time, yet it is the essence of their defining image that is important.

Ultimately, the power of Dostoevskii's 'daydream-recollections' is best embodied in 'Мужик Марей', according to Robert Louis Jackson, who sees the episode as a pivotal moment in the author's artistic and social rehabilitation:

> … the daydream-recollection constituted a form of intuition by analogy; the purified dream-image of Marey momentarily came between Dostoevsky and the convicts. What the daydream-recollection did for Dostoevsky the convict was to open up for Dostoevsky the artist the possibility of a new 'quite different glance'; it opened the way for those months and years of purifying recollection of his years in prison, years of slow spiritual recovery, years of preparation of *House of the Dead*…[55]

Jackson equates the subconscious process of formulating the recollection in Dostoevskii's mind to the process of artistic creation:

> The daydream-recollection, then, is analogous to the artistic process … it is an active creative process working toward a final, integral, complete 'picture'. Further, the daydream-recollection, as a completed memory image, in all its artistic detail, acts upon the dreamer like a work of art: it momentarily transforms him, inwardly and outwardly.[56]

This process of subconscious creation is mirrored in Nadezhda Zhernakova's stylistic analysis of 'Мужик Марей', in which she comments on the regular use of the word 'вдруг'[57]. Every use seems to indicate a breaking-down of barriers, after which we delve into a deeper, more instinctual layer of Dostoevskii's subconscious, free from any (more conscious) moral or social judgements. At the ultimate depth of this story lies a fundamental revelation for Dostoevskii as well as the reader – that of the equality of (Russian) man, no matter their exterior. 'Dostoevsky believed that he could at last see through the surface of the world to a beauty hitherto concealed from the eyes of his moral sensibility,' Frank writes, 'he had finally learned how to

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[55] Jackson, *The Art of Dostoevsky*
[56] Ibid.
[57] Надежда Жернакова, '«Мужик Марей» Достоевского', *Dostoevsky Studies*, Volume 9, 1989, pp. 101-106

separate "his beauty [that of the Russian peasant] from the alluvial barbarism," and "to discover diamonds in this filth".'[58]

Referring to Pavlovian science and theories of religious psychology, Frank persuasively argues that Dostoevskii's 'daydream-recollection' of Marei

> bears all the earmarks of a genuine conversion experience; and it also involves, as we see, a recovery of faith. But it is not faith in God or Christ that is in question; rather, it is a faith in the Russian common people as, in some sense, the human image of Christ.[59]

The inspirational illumination of 'Мужик Марей' also classifies this episode as one of Dostoevskii's most powerful childhood memories. It is already obvious from his fiction that the author placed great value in these recollections of youth. One passage of non-fiction that makes this even more strikingly clear is an extended section of *Дневник писателя* that details a return trip to his parents' estate at Darovoe after 40 years.

> Что святые воспоминания будут и у нынешних детей, сомнения, конечно, быть не может, иначе прекратилась бы живая жизнь. Без святого и драгоценного, унесенного в жизнь из воспоминаний детства, не может и жить человек. Иной, по-видимому, о том и не думает, а все-таки эти воспоминания бессознательно да сохраняет. Воспоминания эти могут быть даже тяжелые, горькие, но ведь прожитое страдание может обратиться впоследствии в святыню для души. Человек и вообще так создан, что любит свое прожитое страдание. Человек, кроме того, уже по самой необходимости наклонен отмечать как бы точки в своем прошедшем, чтобы по ним потом ориентироваться в дальнейшем и выводить по ним хотя бы нечто целое, для порядка и собственного назидания. При этом самые сильнейшие и влияющие воспоминания почти всегда те, которые остаются из детства. (25:172-173)

It is clear that Dostoevskii views such memories as an integral part of 'живая жизнь', as he dubbed the ebb and flow of positive and negative experience over the course of his life; that they represent cornerstones and anchors of guidance in our life; and that without these memories we are merely empty shells.

On examining Dostoevskii's non-fiction further, it is clear that he knows this first-hand. There are numerous episodes from Dostoevskii's childhood or adolescence that

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[58] Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky – The Years of Ordeal 1850-1859*, Princeton University Press, 1983, p. 125
[59] Ibid.

have had a great impact on his life and, consequently, his fiction. Perhaps the earliest such memory is based, somewhat fittingly, in Darovoe. Dostoevskii's younger brother Andrei remembers witnessing the scene of desolation that greeted the family when they first visited the estate after a fire had destroyed almost the whole town in 1833. 'Вся усадьба представлялась пустырем, кое-где торчали обгорелые столбы. Несколько вековых лип около сгоревшего скотного двора тоже обгорели. Картина была непривлекательная.'[60] Such a disturbing image was clearly a key influence on Dmitrii Karamazov's vision of a similarly desolated village in his harrowing dream of the 'дитё', for whom he feels he is guilty and must go to prison in Siberia for.

There were also other, perhaps less clear but no less forgettable, impressions of early cultural influences. Certainly of paramount influence to the future writer was the fact that all of the Dostoevskii children were taught to read by their mother from an 18th-century religious primer, which no doubt stirred in each one of them a reverential awe for the teachings of Christianity. Moreover, one of Dostoevskii's earliest memories was of a dove flying across the cupola of a church he had been taken to by his mother.[61] Frank points out that doves in Russia have long been a revered symbol of the Holy Ghost, a fact probably well-known in the devout Dostoevskii household.[62] As such, it is a memory loaded with religious symbolism.

The influence of such an early awareness of God's omnipotence never left Dostoevskii, despite straying from the Christian path in the years before his arrest; even the latter incident of the dove is recalled towards the end of his life and placed seamlessly into Arkadii Dolgorukii's own childhood memories in *Подросток*; Alesha Karamazov, too, recalls childhood visits to church. The world must have seemed to have been suffused with the devout essence of Christ from his very first impressions of consciousness:

> For a thoughtful and imaginative child it results in a kind of supernatural humanism quite unique in its character. The world, human history, the life of mankind are bathed in a light that nothing henceforth avails to dim

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[60] Тюнькин (ed.), *Ф. М. Достоевский в воспоминаниях современников,* 1, p. 77
[61] Frank, *The Seeds of Revolt*, p. 43.
[62] Ibid.

> or to extinguish. The presence of God, everywhere active, all-powerful, reigns over all things, animate and inanimate.[63]

This, then, is another undoubted influence on the dreamlike nature of reality that Dostoevskii lent some of his novels.

The omnipotence and glory of Russian Orthodoxy also found itself firmly ensconced in the young Dostoevskii via Karamzin's colourful history of the nation, of which Fedor was an avid reader. Catteau writes:

> This history of the Russian land until 1612, told with charm and energy, was read at one gulp like a novel and had the faults and virtues of fiction: a vivid and polished style; leading parts played by individual heroes and villains, princes as it happened; the intervention of supernatural elements, which play the part of the dream, comets, and other prodigies of nature … The feelings which inspired it – adoration of the Russian land, the cult of the State built on suffering, moral condemnation of egotism and tyranny and corresponding praise of virtuous sovereigns – enchanted the child's Manichaean soul. … The book inspired in Dostoevsky that intransigent, even jealous, love for his country, which was a constant of his life and work.[64]

Co-existing with this Christian ethos were the more pagan beliefs introduced by the Dostoevskiis' chief housekeeper at Darovoe, Alena Frolovna, a blend that held sway over practically the whole of the Russian peasantry at this time. Frank writes:

> she brought with her the pagan superstitions and the ritual formalism that the Russian lower classes blended so naturally with their Christianity. … Suffering from frequent nightmares, she always attributed her outcries, which woke the entire family, to the nocturnal visits of the *domovoi* – the Russian house-demon or hobgoblin – who had been strangling her with his claws. … The figure of Alyona was thus surrounded for the children with a certain nimbus of the sacred…[65]

This other, unseen, supernatural or spiritual world undoubtedly proved to be an influence on Dostoevskii's earlier, Gothic tales.[66]

Another key defining image from Dostoevskii's past, this time from his adolescence, is his memory of the courier at a posting station on Fedor and Mikhail's first journey

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[63] Ibid., p. 43n
[64] Catteau, p. 65
[65] Frank, *The Seeds of Revolt*, p. 49
[66] As were the novels of Ann Radcliffe. Dostoevskii recalls, 'в долгие зимние вечера, за неумением грамоте, слушал, разиня рот и замирая от восторга и ужаса, как родители читали на сон грядущий романы Радклиф, от которых я потом бредил во сне в лихорадке.' (5:46)

to St Petersburg. With time obviously a premium in his work, the courier thought nothing of openly beating his coachman, who in turn beat his horses. Such a scene had a profound, nightmarish effect on Dostoevskii, principally in its symbolic loss of innocence. The young Fedor Mikhailovich, from a content if not wealthy family, *en route* to the famous capital for the first time, was given a stark depiction of how brutal reality can be. In his notebooks for *Преступление и наказание*, in which the memory was to be fleshed out in Raskol'nikov's dream of the beaten mare, he writes simply: 'Мое первое личное оскорбление, лошадь, фельдъегерь.' (7:138) It was a rude awakening from Dostoevskii's expectant, Romantic dreams of the capital.

The power of childhood memory is extensively commented on by Dostoevskii in his *Дневник писателя*, particularly pertaining to the theme of the 'accidental family' of errant fathers and unwanted children as dramatised in *Подросток*, and its potential to solve such social problems.

> Вот у вас есть такие воспоминания и такие места, и у всех нас были. Любопытно: что у нынешней молодежи, у нынешних детей и подростков будет драгоценного в их воспоминаниях, и будет ли? Главное, что именно? Какого рода?
>
> […] и сомнения нет, что воспоминания и впечатления, и, может быть, самые сильные и святые, унесутся и нынешними детьми в жизнь. Но что именно будет в этих воспоминаниях, что именно унесут они с собою в жизнь, как именно оформируется для них этот дорогой запас – всё это, конечно, и любопытный и серьезный вопрос. Если б можно было хоть сколько-нибудь предугадать на него ответ, то можно бы было утолить много современных тревожных сомнений, и, может быть, многие бы радостно уверовали в русскую молодежь; главное же – можно бы было хоть сколько-нибудь почувствовать наше будущее, наше русское столь загадочное будущее. Но беда в том, что […] никогда семейство русское не было более расшатано, разложено, более нерассортировано и неоформлено, как теперь. […] Современное русское семейство становится всё более и более *случайным* семейством. […] Иные и столь серьезные даже люди говорят прямо, что русского семейства теперь «вовсе нет». (25:172-173)

Also, Dostoevskii surmises that the cause of one of the 'Два самоубийства' he reports in October 1876 – since identified as the daughter of Aleksandr Herzen – was essentially that of an oppressed childhood that had resulted in no happy memories to take forward in life.

> Тут слышится душа именно возмутившаяся против «прямолинейности» явлений […] сообщившейся ей в доме отца еще с детства. […] всему она, чему научена была с детства, верила прямо, на слово, и это вернее всего. Значит, просто умерла от «холодного мрака и скуки», с страданием, так сказать, животным и безотчетным, просто стало душно жить, вроде того, как бы воздуху недостало. Душа не вынесла прямолинейности безотчетно и безотчетно потребовала чего-нибудь более сложного… (23:145-146)

Gary Saul Morson summarises: 'when he reports on narcissistic suicides… he traces them to childhood homes infected with materialism and fashionable scepticism, homes incapable of producing the good memories necessary for later life'[67]. Dostoevskii also bases fiction on the suicides of those denied a stable upbringing, such as in the diary's story 'Кроткая': 'Об иных вещах, как они с виду ни *просты*, долго не перестается думать, как-то мерещится, и даже точно вы в них виноваты.' (23:146) This consolidates the great theme of *Братья Карамазовы* that 'each is guilty for all'. This guilt is manifest in the subconscious of the nation, and can consequently appear as guilt-laden dreams among the populace. The cure for this guilt is a stable society built on stable families, promoting happy childhoods. It is ultimately a testament to Dostoevskii's belief in the power of potentially life-changing, character-forming, powerful, dreamlike childhood memories, that he believes they could be tapped to use as a cure for Russia's social ills of the time.

Ultimately, where we can draw a definitive parallel between Dostoevskii's *мечтательность* and that of his characters is in the formative experience of the *мечтатель*: the wild, vivid imagination fed by a sheltered childhood (in Dostoevskii's case the grounds of a Moscow hospital and the family estate in Darovoe); the exposure to the fanciful worlds of literature; and the dreamlike atmosphere of St Petersburg, the capital city with an overwhelming aura of possibility. The visions of the narrator of *Белые ночи*, Netochka's life behind the red curtains, Arkadii's dreams of wealth, the young Dostoevskii's hopes for literary success: in St Petersburg it seems as if anything can happen – so why can't one's dreams?

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[67] Gary Saul Morson, 'Introductory Study: Dostoevsky's Great Experiment', in Fyodor Dostoevsky, *A Writer's Diary, Volume One 1873-1876* (trans. Kenneth Lantz), Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 1993, p. 18

2. DREAMLIKE REALITY

This is the biggest 'grey area' category of imagery of the subconscious in Dostoevskii's works, and can be said to operate between two extremes: that of clouded confusion between dream and reality, and that of reality perceived so intensely as to appear unreal. Despite some overlapping between the two, both of these extremes will be studied separately in this chapter.

In both cases the text is usually governed by 'dream logic', where perceived reality does not seem subject to the laws of physics or established patterns of behaviour. Dostoevskii builds on this mode of narrative by introducing different textual layers, in which, for example, a character may appear to fall asleep or wake up without having actually done so – dreams within dreams, as it were. This can result in extended periods of text which rise and fall through varying forms, degrees, or 'depths' of the subconscious mode. Characters can sink into dreamlike reality from daydreams or reverie, and can occasionally sink deeper into hallucinations or dreams, while dreamlike reality itself can operate at varying depths in relation to the extent of its confusion. In this category of imagery, however, the experience can always be traced back to reality, no matter how obscured in the subconscious it becomes.

This movement between lack of definite reality on one hand and pure dream experience on the other is recognised by both medicine and philosophy, most notably in the 'continuity hypothesis'.[68] Other experts, such as psychoanalyst Lawrence S. Kubie, refer to a 'preconscious stream', a store of experience similar to Jung's collective unconscious 'which flows 24 hours a day under the influence of both conscious and unconscious forces, and constitutes the matrix of dream content.'[69] We could say that where this 'matrix of dream content' is accessed, subconscious experience occurs. For, while Kubie's terminology draws on Freud, his analogy is a

[68] La Barre, 'Anthropological perspectives on hallucination and hallucinogens', in Siegel and West (eds.), *Hallucinations*, p. 20. In the same volume, C. Wade Savage even cites Descartes and Locke as two very different believers in the continuity hypothesis ('The continuity of perceptual and cognitive experiences', p. 260).
[69] Louis Jolyon West, 'A clinical and theoretical overview of hallucinatory phenomena', in Siegel and West (eds.), *Hallucinations*, p. 302

more free-flowing model and therefore, like the 'continuity hypothesis' relates to the idea of a fluid subconscious as defined for the purpose of this thesis.

There is a case for the artist having a special ability to provide access to this 'preconscious stream', to consciously create causal connections in a text (or other art forms) that trigger a previously unknown response in the reader's psyche that cannot be self-accessed: 'Dream mentation can to a degree be consciously tapped during waking hours. … the creative artist is one who uses dream-like mentation when he is awake. Surprising relationships which artists are able to discover often appear to laymen only in their dreams.'[70] This may, indeed, be the very definition of artistic genius.

CONFUSED REALITY

In Dostoevskii's works, dreamlike reality due to a character's confused state arises almost always due to some form of illness. This common ailment is, however, difficult to define. We can only be certain that its symptoms include insomnia, loss of appetite, dizziness, fever and delirium, all of which at least in part provide the basis for confusion between dream and reality. Lack of sleep alone can induce hallucinatory states or at least states of great uncertainty, and consequent abnormal behaviour.[71] Combined with malnutrition, these two basic factors alone may result in the 'illness' experienced by Dostoevskii's protagonists. Many characters also obsess over their *мечты*, be they immoral, fantastic, or both – and this can result in a kind of spiritual illness, a detachment from reality and from God. To other people, those in a confused, dreamlike state can appear relatively normal, if a bit disorientated.

Occasionally, dreamlike episodes can be a simple confusion between dream and reality experienced by the character – albeit with convincing arguments for both. More often than not, this confusion is passed on to the reader, often by means of textual layering. Other episodes retain a clouded, confused atmosphere – quite often

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[70] E. C. Barksdale, *Daggers of the Mind – Structuralism and Neuropsychology in an Exploration of the Russian Literary Imagination*, Coronado Press, 1979, p. 48

[71] 'Some early REM-deprivation studies reported that subjects could begin to hallucinate and display other abnormalities in behaviour, but these reports have not been confirmed.' (Bryan Kolb & Ian Q. Whishaw, *An Introduction to Brain and Behavior*, Worth, New York, 2006, p. 467)

the characters involved say as much – yet there is no doubt, in the reader's mind at least, that they operate in reality. However, a pervading dream logic imbues them with qualities of imagery of the subconscious, and as such, we are afforded insights into the relevant character's psyche.

Ordynov

Dostoevskii's character most exposed to confused dreamlike reality is Ordynov, the protagonist of 'Хозяйка' – a text that is heavily laden with dreamlike imagery and, if we are to take the view of A. L. Bem, may in fact be exclusively a product of Ordynov's delirium.[72] Bem's analysis, however, seems too simplistic in its division of inner and outer realities, and the projection of the former to the latter, or 'драматизация бреда'. While a definite reality exists in this text, there appears to be no definite 'inner' reality. Instead, there are gradations of dreamlike reality through which Ordynov sinks deeper into his subconscious, as the continuity hypothesis postulates. A corresponding 'vagueness' of style is achieved through Dostoevskii's use of indefinite endings (e.g., 'когда-то', 'что-то', 'какое-то')[73]

Bem, in fact, is closer to a view of subconscious 'continuity' in a later essay which refers to Dostoevskii's works in a broader scope: 'он уничтожает границы между сном и действительностью, может быть, даже между бытием и небытием. Сначала видение, больной призрак воображения, потом реально действующее лицо – грань исчезает, и ея точно не чувствует сам автор'[74]. It is this dismantling of borders, and the difficulty in re-establishing where they once lay and where they lie in the present of the text, that is a narrative and, indeed, characterological feature of 'Хозяйка'.

From the outset of the tale, we find that Ordynov is marked with attributes that indicate a strong tendency towards experiencing subconscious phenomena. A classic *мечтатель* who has locked himself away in his room and lived the life of a recluse

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[72] А. Л. Бем, 'Драматизация бреда («Хозяйка» Достоевского)', in А. Л. Бем (ed.), *О Достоевском – сборник статей, I,* Прага 1929, pp. 77-124

[73] Pointed out by Edward Wasiolek (*Dostoevsky – The Major Fiction*, MIT Press, Cambridge, 1964, p. 13).

[74] Бем, 'Снотворчество', in *Достоевский – Психоаналитические этюды*, Прага, 1938, p. 35

for two years, Ordynov is thrown back into reality at the start of the text when he is forced to look for new lodgings. His *мечтательность* stems from his obsessive studying. The story's narrator refers to this simply as 'наука', described as his 'страсть', 'самая глубокая, самая ненасытимая, истощающая всю жизнь человека и не выделяющая таким существам, как Ордынов, ни одного угла в сфере другой, практической, житейской деятельности.' Aware of the dangers of *мечтательность*, the narrator adds: 'страсть Ордынова была обращенным на него же оружием.' (1:265)

Ordynov's independent study is not without purpose, but it is a vague and nebulous goal. He chases the *мечта* of a 'система' that always seems to elude meaning. This path to an enlightenment just beyond comprehension is in itself a very dreamlike attribute:

> она выживалась в нем годами, и в душе его уже мало-помалу восставал еще темный, неясный, но как-то дивно-отрадный образ идеи, воплощенной в новую, просветленную форму, и эта форма просилась из души его, терзая эту душу […] Но срок воплощения и создания был еще далек, может быть, очень далек, может быть, совсем невозможен! (1:266)

Ordynov's psychological obsession, like that of the *мечтатели*, is tied to the city of St Petersburg, the city of *мечты* either realised, eternally chased, or crushed. As is so often the case in Dostoevskii, the latter outcome is realised in 'Хозяйка'. Yet it could be argued that this text presents a possible cure for Ordynov, when one of his aimless ramblings takes him to the countryside just outside the city limits and the haze of clouded, dreamlike confusion drops from his eyes:

> он очнулся, когда мертвая тишина поразила его новым, давно неведомым ему впечатлением. День был сухой и морозный, какой нередко бывает в петербургском октябре. Неподалеку была изба; возле нее два стога сена; маленькая круторебрая лошаденка, понуря голову, с отвислой губой, стояла без упряжи подле двуколесной таратайки, казалось об чем-то раздумывая. Дворная собака ворча грызла кость вблизи разбитого колеса, и трехлетний ребенок в одной рубашонке, почесывая свою белую мохнатую голову, с удивлением глядел на зашедшего одинокого горожанина. За избой тянулись поля и огороды. На краю синих небес чернелись леса, а с противоположной стороны находили мутные снежные облака, как будто гоня перед собою стаю перелетных птиц, без крика, одна за другою, пробиравшихся по небу. Всё было тихо и как-то

торжественно-грустно, полно какого-то замиравшего,
притаившегося ожидания… (1:270)

Here life is simple, uncomplicated, ruled by the laws of nature, not man. There is no need for books or grand *мечты* here. The novel sensation Ordynov feels seems to be a natural affinity to the landscape, described so archetypically that it may have been painted by a 19th-century Russian master. It is a connection to nature, to the Russian soil, perhaps even to Ordynov's youth when he may have lived in the country, as so many people did before the lure of the capital drew them to the city.

There is however, a sad sense of decay looming over this scene – perhaps a veiled reference to tsarist society's almost subhuman treatment of the serfs, an injustice the young Dostoevskii felt keenly. It is this sense of desolation, combined with Ordynov's addiction to ruminating over his *мечта*, that leads him to turn his back on the countryside and return to the chaotic swarm of the city, where he can become lost in the throng and in his own thoughts. The 'густой гул колоколов' (1:270) ominously summons him to his fateful meeting in the church, where he hopes to once again see the old man and young girl who captured his imagination the day before.

It is this contact with new-found reality on the fringes of the city, away from his internal 'система', that precipitates Ordynov's undefined illness, which seems to be spiritual, mental and physical. It is particularly exacerbated by his encounter with Murin and Katerina, the latter of whom introduces him to the further confusion of love, or at least infatuation. Like the countryside scene, these two characters are drawn very archetypically, 'typical persons of tales or myths'[75] – the tortured girl craving love and also freedom from an old, controlling father figure – to an almost unreal degree that furthers the confusion between dream and reality. It is almost as if they are projections of Ordynov's fevered mind. Indeed, the moment Katerina and Murin are introduced to the story bears close similarities to the moment in *Двойник* when Goliadkin 'splits', and his double appears. 'В припадке глубокой волнующей тоски и какого-то подавленного чувства Ордынов прислонился к стене в самом темном углу церкви и забылся на мгновение. Он очнулся, когда мерный, глухой звук двух вошедших прихожан раздался под сводами храма.'

[75] Ágnes Dukkon, 'Conception of the Dream and the Vision in Dostoevskij's Early Novels', in *Studia Slavica*, 42 (3-4), 1997, pp. 245-53

(1:267) Here is the same subconscious power – 'подавленное чувство' – borne of physical and mental exhaustion, that produces Goliadkin junior[76]. The 'самый темный угол' of the church seems to symbolise a dark corner of Ordynov's mind, from which these two 'mythic' characters emanate. We will later see the Murin archetype in Ordynov's dream of the evil old man; while Katerina would appear to be Ordynov's idealised 'love interest', who he must 'heroically' save from her tormentor. Katerina later tells Ordynov, 'Я не здешняя' (1:276), as if to underline her unreality. She is not from this part of the world; indeed, she may well not be of this world at all, but from the subconscious plane, the mythical realm of archetypes that is outlined in her fantastical gothic tale of her background and the circumstances of her 'kidnapping' by Murin. Of this episode of her life, she admits herself: 'Это давно уже было, очень давно, я и не помню когда, а всё как будто вчера передо мною, словно сон вчерашний, что сосал мне сердце всю ночь.' (1:294)

It is at this moment in the church that the reader is plunged into the first layer of subconscious obfuscation. Katerina and Murin appear only as Ordynov seems to regain consciousness; yet there is no certainty that he does, and so the dreamlike atmosphere of the text gathers force. Ordynov is immediately drawn to the striking image of the austere old man and his younger, weeping female companion, whose face bears 'следы какого-то детского страха и таинственного ужаса' (1:268) – an almost supernaturally expressive presence.

When Ordynov later returns to the church to find the couple again, the text descends into a deeper layer. Ordynov, again, has a dreamlike sense of not being aware of his own actions: 'Он почти не заметил, как кончилось богослужение, и очнулся, продираясь за своей незнакомкой сквозь сплотившуюся у входа толпу.' (1:271) By the time Ordynov tracks down Katerina and Murin and asks to move in to their apartment as a lodger (in the aptly-named 'Koshmarov' tenements – the tenements of nightmares), his obsession with the mysterious girl has heightened his illness to the point of collapse, and reality has become almost totally obscured.

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[76] 'господин Голядкин дошел до такого отчаяния, так был истерзан, так был измучен, до того изнемог и опал и без того уже слабыми остатками духа, что позабыл обо всем […] вдруг он вздрогнул всем телом и невольно отскочил шага на два в сторону.' (1:139)

At this point, T. Szabó strengthens the idea that Katerina and Murin are mythical figures by drawing a comparison to traditional Russian *сказка*, as analysed in V. Ia. Propp's *Морфология сказки* (1928). Firstly, the staircase Ordynov climbs to their apartment has strong symbolic significance: 'Лестница – это типичное средство перехода в потусторонний мир'[77], in this case a world of conscious-subconscious confusion and dreamlike imagery. Secondly, Murin comes to symbolise the guard of the threshold between two worlds, reality and dream; he also stands guard over Katerina. He is the 'snake' that must be slain to rescue the 'princess':

> в сюжетном времени повести Мурин играет роль сторожа Катерины: постоянно старается отстранить Ордынова от Катерины; при появлении и уходе молодого человека он стоит в дверях квартиры, открывает дверь перед Ордыновым и закрывает ее после окончательного ухода Ордынова. Этим он тематизирует постоянную функцию сказочного змея, который охраняет границу между двумя мирами.'[78]

In this light, it is fitting that Ordynov should physically collapse and plunge into an extended period of conscious-subconscious confusion upon his entry to Katerina and Murin's apartment:

> присел на лавку, и ему показалось, что он заснул. По временам приходил он в себя и догадывался, что сон его был не сон, а какое-то мучительное, болезненное забытье. […] Он привстал […] но оступился и упал на кучу дров […] Тут он совершенно забылся и, раскрыв глаза после долгого-долгого времени, с удивлением заметил, что лежит на той же лавке, так, как был, одетый […] Наконец он впал в беспамятство. (1:274-75)

This final statement would appear to be the terminus of the 'сон' – which is perhaps just his delirious first few moments in his new room – and signifies a final fall into unconsciousness. Yet, even seeing Katerina upon wakening, 'ему казалось, что он всё еще видит сон.' (1:275) Ordynov remains in this utterly confused (and confusing) state throughout his stay with Katerina and Murin, which is punctuated by multiple slips into unconsciousness and semi-consciousness, and where nothing can be taken for granted.

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[77] Т. Сабо, 'Волшебная сказка и повесть Достоевского «Хозяйка»', in *Slavica*, XXVIII, 1997, 75-84
[78] Ibid.

It is interesting to note, however, that Ordynov seems to be externally aware of the confused reality he is currently experiencing, as if an isolated part of his consciousness is still tuned to true reality; for 'мелькало в уме его, что он осужден жить в каком-то длинном, нескончаемом сне' (1:277). But this is a fleeting, isolated experience of reality, punctured only by fleeting glimpses of Katerina, who is apparently tending to him at his bedside.

At this point in the text Ordynov seems to exist in a fluid continuum of textual layers, as if he is struggling to stay above the surface of an ocean of varying subconscious depths – a narrative representation of the continuity hypothesis. Occasionally he comes up for air, for example when he sees Katerina; but then he is pulled under again by his illness, which forces him down further into deeper unconsciousness: 'какая-то неведомая сила опять поражала его, и он слышал, чувствовал ясно, как он снова теряет память, как вновь непроходимая, бездонная темень разверзается перед ним и он бросается в нее с воплем тоски и отчаяния.' (1:277)

The deepest layer of confused reality that Ordynov experiences is his actual, definite dream sequence – which, in his confused state, nevertheless informs his subsequent actions. He experiences two principal *сны*. The first is of an old man who destroys his childhood idyll, takes his mother from him, and corrupts his innocence: 'смущало его каким-то недетским ужасом, которое вливало первый медленный яд горя и слез в его жизнь […] и стал по целым ночам нашептывать ему длинную, дивную сказку, невнятную для сердца дитяти, но терзавшую, волновавшую его ужасом и недетскою страстью.' (1:278-79)

Most critics have justifiably linked the old man to Murin, who will soon exert a similarly terrifying power. He also corresponds to the archetype existing in Ordynov's subconscious, as displayed in this dream. Yet the old man, in a symbolic guise of worldly experience, can also be construed as Ordynov's awakening from innocence due to his obsession with 'наука'. Perhaps it was exposure to certain books that introduced in Ordynov 'недетский ужас' at an early age, that awoke in him the tragedies of 'медленный яд горя и слез'. Fittingly: 'он смутно чувствовал, как неведомый старик держит во власти своей все его грядущие годы' (1:279).

This new-found knowledge then usurped his childhood completely, ‘отогнал рои светлых духов, шелестевших своими золотыми и сапфирными крыльями кругом его колыбели’; ‘отвел от него навсегда его бедную мать’ (1:279), as his obsession took hold. The corruption is complete when ‘малютка просыпался вдруг человеком’ (1:279). Ordynov’s exposure to literature and knowledge perhaps came at an unnaturally early an age, although his understanding of it may have been considered a gift. But in nurturing that gift, Ordynov’s thirst for knowledge effectively denied him his childhood, as he became locked into solitary *мечтательность*.

The second *сон* is a continuation, in which the effects of his obsession and their consequences, actual and possible, are revealed in an all-encompassing vision (perhaps an *обмирание*[79]). But at the same time he is aware of ‘таинственные, подозрительные люди’, ‘которые всё собираются и шепчутся по углам его темной комнаты’ (1:279), as if notions of self-doubt are creeping into his consciousness about his grand *мечта*. The whispering also echoes the evil presence of the old man, but this time the ‘сказка’ is hidden from Ordynov. Then, ‘опять началась шепотливая, длинная сказка […] сказка воплощалась перед ним в лица и формы […]

> Он видел, как всё, начиная с детских, неясных грез его, все мысли и мечты его, всё, что он выжил жизнию, всё, что вычитал в книгах, всё, об чем уже и забыл давно, всё одушевлялось, всё складывалось, воплощалось, вставало перед ним в колоссальных формах и образах, ходило, роилось кругом него […] наконец, теперь, вокруг болезненного одра его, каждая мысль его, каждая бесплотная греза, воплощалась почти в миг зарождения; как, наконец, он мыслил не бесплотными идеями, а целыми мирами, целыми созданиями […] и как вся эта жизнь, своею мятежною независимостью, давит, гнетет его и преследует его вечной, бесконечной иронией; он слышал, как он умирает, разрушается в пыль и прах, без воскресения, на веки веков, он хотел бежать, но не было угла во всей вселенной, чтоб укрыть его. (1:279-80)

Michael Katz believes this passage is the origin of one of Dostoevskii’s ‘most cherished ideas: that thoughts and figurative dreams have an organic life of their

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[79] See appendix.

own, that once conceived, they become personified or embodied in forms and images, and that they can turn against their originator and pursue him to distraction.' The dream, then, is a symbolic representation of Ordynov's mental state. 'Ordynov comprehends the power of his own former figurative dreams (*mechty*) only in his experiential dream (*son*)'[80]. For the first time, he sees objectively where his obsessive *мечта* is leading him. Notably, 'всё, что он выжил жизнию' seems to consist of only 'мысли и мечты', underlining Ordynov's lack of experience of everyday reality. And it is this dominance of ideas in his life that will ultimately lead to his lonely end, his ultimate ostracisation from reality which began with his 'corruption' in childhood. In fact, it can be argued that Ordynov has never grown up; he is still living in the world of imagination. His dream tells him that 'he has to abandon from an infantile state and reach fully adulthood.'[81]

It can be argued that it is in Katerina that Ordynov finally thinks he has realised his *мечта*. His ultimate 'система' that seems so 'темный, неясный', yet 'дивно-отрадный' may well be something as simple yet nebulous as love, or at least infatuation. Ordynov certainly encounters a sense of ultimate wish fulfilment, a final goal realised, in winning Katerina's affections:

> Была минута, когда он почти чувствовал смерть и готов был встретить ее как светлую гостью: так напряглись его впечатления, таким могучим порывом закипела по пробуждении вновь его страсть, таким восторгом обдало душу его, что жизнь, ускоренная напряженною деятельностью, казалось, готова была перерваться, разрушиться, истлеть в один миг и угаснуть навеки. (1:302)

Ordynov's delirium is thus heightened by his happiness, ultimately to the verge of madness and death.[82] Finding the answers to the ultimate questions – and for such an isolated, insular man love must be very 'невозможен' – leads to insanity.

Fittingly, it is Katerina's kiss that induces unconsciousness in Ordynov and leads to the major dream sequence in the tale. She is the source of the mystery of the text, yet at the same time the answer to Ordynov's *мечта*. Such is his ecstatic pleasure at the

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[80] Michael R. Katz, *Dreams and the Unconscious in Nineteenth-Century Russian Fiction*, University Press of New England, 1984, pp. 93-94
[81] Dukkon, 'Conception of the Dream and the Vision in Dostoevskij's Early Novels', p. 251
[82] Much in the same way as the clerk Vasia Shumkin in 'Слабое сердце' goes mad because he feels he does not deserve happiness.

kiss that it seems to induce pain, ‘как будто ножом его ударили в сердце.’ (1:277) During the height of his illness, her appearances at Ordynov’s bedside are aptly ghostlike for a sketchily drawn character; yet her effect on the protagonist is clear: ‘Часто жадно ловил он руками какую-то тень, часто слышались ему шелест близких, легких шагов около постели его и сладкий, как музыка, шепот чьих-то ласковых, нежных речей … и вдруг чей-то поцелуй, долгий, нежный, впивался в его губы; тогда жизнь его изнывала в неугасимой муке’ (1:278).

She later appears as some almost divine, heavenly vision:

> Ему вдруг показалось, что она опять склонилась над ним, что глядит в его глаза своими чудно-ясными глазами […] тихими и ясными, как бирюзовый нескончаемый купол неба в жаркий полдень. […] таким обетованием нескончаемого блаженства теплилась ее улыбка […] что стон вырвался из его обессиленной груди от радости. Она хотела ему что-то сказать; она ласково что-то поверяла ему. Опять как будто сердце пронзающая музыка поразила слух его. (1:289)

Like Efimov’s final violin piece in *Неточка Незванова*, emotion is expressed as music. Here it conveys again that the answers to the mystery of the text and to Ordynov’s *мечта* are just beyond comprehension. Katerina’s words come out as music, an emotional, elemental expression rather than the relatively clearer logic of words. This suggests that the mystery of ‘Хозяйка’, the mystery of Murin and Katerina, indeed the answer to the ultimate *мечта*, cannot be conveyed by spoken word: it is left to music, art, to attempt to solve.

Following his dream, Ordynov continues to try to grasp hold of external reality while struggling to search his subconscious for the answer to his *мечта*. This is portrayed by Dostoevskii’s methods of layering and deliberate confusion, which are always consolidated by external, physical factors, markers of reality.

> На миг мелькнуло в уме его, что он видел всё это во сне. Но в тот же миг весь состав его изныл в замирающей тоске, когда впечатление ее горячего дыхания, ее слов, ее поцелуя наклеймилось снова в его воображении. Он закрыл глаза и забылся. Где-то пробили часы; становилось поздно; падали сумерки. (1:289)

Images of this doubtful, shrouded reality – ‘видел всё это во сне’, ‘замирающая тоска’, ‘он забылся’, ‘падали сумерки’ – is mixed with more concrete reality, ‘ее поцелуя наклеймилось’, ‘пробили часы’. But time has no bearing, as the text

remains mired in obscurity: ‘Были рассвет или сумерки; в комнате всё еще было темно.’ (1:302)

After Ordynov’s dreams, ‘он чувствовал, что сон его был сном болезненным. Опомнясь, он провел рукой по лицу, как будто снимая с себя сон и ночные видения.’ (1:302) Ordynov is still confused, still ill, and he has been dreaming – but it is difficult to determine how far these dreams go back in the text. The passage continues: ‘Вместе с сознанием воротилась и память […] в один миг пережил он воспоминанием всю прошлую ночь.’ (1:302) However, by this point the reader has learned to distrust the reality of Ordynov’s ‘воспоминания’.

The final confrontation between Ordynov, Katerina and Murin culminates in a strange tableau of all three seemingly fixed in a waking sleep. Murin opens his eyes and laughs while asleep; Katerina ‘как будто тоже теряла сознание, как будто одна мысль, одна неподвижная идея увлекла ее всю’ (1:310); Ordynov, ‘не помня, почти не сознавая себя’, removes a dagger from the wall with the intent of striking the old man – but ‘он чувствовал, что как будто кто-то вырывал, подмывал потерявшуюся руку его на безумство’. He moves as if in slow motion, which is curious considering his strong feelings for Katerina. All three characters barely interact with each other at this point. They seem stuck inside themselves despite inhabiting the same scene, as if they are all confused as to whether they are conscious or not. It is only at the point where Ordynov suddenly recognises Murin is feigning illness, and drops the dagger, that the spell is broken: ‘Катерина вскрикнула, как будто очнувшись от забытья, от кошмара, от тяжелого, неподвижного виденья…’ (1:311)

Following this encounter, when Murin again re-asserts his control over Katerina, Ordynov leaves the apartment and returns to reality. However, this time it is a reality devoid of even his former *мечта*, his ‘система’. His encounter with Katerina has made him realise the value of embracing this reality, of fostering relationships and social connections, of living life:

> проблема квартиры в тексте сразу же превращается в экзистенциальную проблему: прежняя квартира становится эквивалентом нехватки жизни и любви. «Он начал бояться за всю свою жизнь… Ему вдруг пришло в голову, что всю жизнь свою он

был одинок, что никто не любил его, да и ему никого не удавалось любить.»[83]

But by this point, Ordynov is too far gone: 'сознание его цепенело […] Жест его, взгляд, непроизвольные движения дрожавших посинелых губ – всё предсказывало в нем помешательство.' (1:316) It is as if he has continued sinking into the oblivion that clouded his time with Katerina and Murin. He falls into a deeper illness and does not recover for three months – and although he seems to recover physically, he grows more detached mentally. By the end of 'Хозяйка' he suffers even more from the isolation of *мечтательность* than before. Ultimately, it is a combination of his illness and lack of experience in life and love – due to his passion for 'наука' – that have made Ordynov susceptible to a mentally debilitating confusion between dreams and reality.

Raskol'nikov

Another of Dostoevskii's characters who finds himself in such dreamlike confusion is Raskol'nikov, whose delirious states obfuscate the true nature of reality in many passages of *Преступление и наказание*. Dostoevskii often based his later characters on composites of earlier ones, and it is fitting, then, that Joseph Frank has drawn a similarity between Raskol'nikov's brutally utilitarian 'теория' and Ordynov's elusive 'система':

> The 'dreamer' of the 1840s, lost in solitary reverie, had become alienated from ordinary human life and lived in a world of Romantic fantasy; but he also wished to make contact with 'reality', and even to transform the world and bring it more into conformity with his visionary longings. In *The Landlady*, the dismal failure of the main character to accomplish such a feat anticipates Raskolnikov's final acceptance of Sonia's faith … This edifying conclusion is an admission of defeat in the 1840s, rather than, as in *Crime and Punishment*, a resurrection and the beginning of a new life of hope and regeneration in the 1860s.[84]

Raskol'nikov is offered a way out of the world of *мечты* by the penitent, devoted prostitute Sonia, but Ordynov is not so lucky – his potential female saviour, Katerina, appears to be only another part of that dreamlike world. However, the dreamlike

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[83] Сабо, 'Волшебная сказка и повесть Достоевского «Хозяйка»', p. 77
[84] Frank, *The Stir of Liberation*, pp. 98-99

situations that Raskol'nikov finds himself in before his 'resurrection' bear strong similarities to those of Ordynov.

Reality always seems clouded for Raskol'nikov, who, from the novel's beginning, wanders the streets of St Petersburg in detached isolation from passers-by, muttering to himself. These traits intensify following the double murder he commits, as he sinks into mental illness. Although he appears to recover physically, he is clearly not fully himself – this does not seem to occur until after he openly repents at the novel's end. Even after he confesses his crimes to Sonia, his consciousness remains strangely obscured, as if his mind is clouded by a guilt that only repentance can disperse:

> Для Раскольникова наступило странное время: точно туман упал вдруг перед ним и заключил его в безвыходное и тяжелое уединение. Припоминая это время потом, уже долго спустя, он догадывался, что сознание его иногда как бы тускнело и что так продолжалось, с некоторыми промежутками, вплоть до окончательной катастрофы. Он был убежден положительно, что во многом тогда ошибался, например в сроках и времени некоторых происшествий. […] Одно событие он смешивал, например, с другим; другое считал последствием происшествия, существовавшего только в его воображении. (6:335)

Raskol'nikov is losing track of the momentous events of the past and even current reality seems dreamlike. He is in total thrall to his *мечта*, no matter how repulsive he finds it at times. The chaos of his theory has come to the fore and is now manifesting itself in reality, having appeared in varying forms of subconscious imagery: it was formulated in Raskol'nikov's grand *мечта* to become a 'Napoleon', then takes greater shape in his terrifying *сон* of the beaten mare, before being unleashed in the intense, dreamlike reality of the scene in which the pawnbroker is murdered. Its awful potentiality hovers between dream and reality and becomes something Raskol'nikov, unconsciously (i.e. not consciously), desperately wants to escape. This is made apparent as he lies in dreamlike delirium following the murder. N. V. Kasatkin and V. N. Kasatkina write:

> Хаос, наполнявший душу Раскольникова, получает свою реализацию во сне. В то же время этот хаос имеет совершенно конкретные очертания, притом социально-бытовые. Хаос и сон совмещаются. Особенно показательны в этом отношении сны Раскольникова: он находится в лихорадочном состоянии, в бреду и полусознании. Ему кажется, что вокруг него собирается много

> народу, его хотят взять, вынести куда-то. Ему грозят, сговариваются о чем-то, смеются, дразнят его, ему казалось, что он что-то забыл, чего нельзя забывать. ... Он хотел бежать, но всегда кто-то останавливал его. Хаос, в который оказался ввергнутым Раскольников, обнаруживает свой ужасный облик. Теперь хаос уже не сон, а бред и невообразимое страданье. Раскольников не хочет раствориться в этом хаосе, он хочет бежать, спастись, но для этого надо припомнить нечто забытое, утерянное, что Раскольников уже сделать не может.[85]

The worlds of dream and reality are meshed into a whole, which is reigned over by the chaos Raskol'nikov has unleashed. It is only when he confronts this chaos during his confession, instead of continually trying to escape it, that he defeats it.

Antony Johae has shown how the recurrent symbolism of the colour yellow in the novel is just one expression of this intertwining of dreams and reality[86]. It appears in the yellow wallpaper of Raskol'nikov's and Sonia's room, the yellow wood of Porfirii Petrovich's office, the yellowness of the moneylender's flat and her jacket, Sonia's yellow licence for prostitution; and pervading all is the yellow fog and smog of St Petersburg. The colour also makes frequent appearances in Raskol'nikov's dream in which he tries to murder the pawnbroker again. More than this, yellow is also 'the signifier of the dreamer's disease'[87]: Johae juxtaposes the words 'желтый' and 'желчный'. In addition to describing Raskol'nikov's possible physical ailment,

> the word 'bilious' or 'jaundiced' *expresses* what Raskolnikov feels about the world around him, causing him to remark on its yellowness. It may also be noticed that the yellowness of Raskolnikov's room … appears in association with his perception of its closeness and stuffiness, an association which links the protagonist's emotional life with his incipient disease.[88]

There is one place where he is afforded clarity – the view from the Nikolaevskii Bridge, where he often stops to gaze at the panorama of the city. This view, the same one that inspires Dostoevskii's 'vision on the Neva', usually affords an escape from the tumult and Raskol'nikov's own confused haze of thoughts.

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[85] Н. В. Касаткин, В. Н. Касаткина, *Тайна человека. Своеобразие реализма Ф. М. Достоевского*, Московский педагогический университет, Москва, 1994, p. 163
[86] Johae, 'Expressive symbols in Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*'
[87] Ibid., p. 18
[88] Ibid., p. 19

> …it is only here that he actually stops and thinks – as opposed to mechanically discharging the energy which in the congested city accumulates in him; it is one of the few coordinates in time and space where he can break free from the oppressiveness of the modern city and get in touch with his true self.[89]

Leslie Johnson convincingly argues that this view provides active inspiration for Raskol'nikov's crime, in its juxtaposition of human and heavenly dominion, and its lowly perspective of the individual in the sprawling metropolis. Essentially, Raskol'nikov's theories before the crime come into a clearer focus while gazing out over the Neva to the panorama beyond:

> standing there on the bridge, Raskolnikov beheld two kinds of splendour: the grandeur of Empire and the glory of God represented by the recently completed St Isaac's Cathedral. … he knew that the worldly grandeur depended on the perpetuation of terrible evil, and perhaps he wondered why the glorious light shining from the cupola … did not permeate the 'inexplicable cold' … of the Imperial buildings. Perhaps this view spurred his fascination with history, for it seemed to say, in a picture worth a thousand words, that the empire of Caesar – or Napoleon, or Peter – would never give way to the Kingdom of God. Never, that is, unless the new word of messianic terror were proclaimed … bring the inertia of history to an end, and force the New Jerusalem into existence.[90]

Each time he views this panorama, Raskol'nikov finds himself on the edge of some great meaning, 'каждый раз почти удивляться одному неясному и неразрешимому своему впечатлению. Необъяснимым холодом веяло на него всегда от этой великолепной панорамы; духом немым и глухим полна была для него эта пышная картина… Дивился он каждый раз своему угрюмому и загадочному впечатлению' (6:90). It is as if Petersburg holds the key to some great mystery that Raskol'nikov can never quite define – much like Ordynov's elusive 'система'.

And, indeed, it is here that Raskol'nikov has his own 'vision on the Neva', on the day following the murder of the pawnbroker and her sister. But, accordingly, the vision is poisoned by his deed and the view now only succeeds in obscuring him and isolating him further, both from his former life and from the rest of humanity.

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[89] Buchanan, p. 9
[90] Leslie A. Johnson, *The Experience of Time in* Crime and Punishment, Slavica, Columbus, 1984, pp. 73-75

> В какой-то глубине, внизу, где-то чуть видно под ногами, показалось ему теперь всё это прежнее прошлое, и прежние мысли, и прежние задачи, и прежние темы, и прежние впечатления, и вся эта панорама, и он сам, и всё, всё… Казалось, он улетал куда-то вверх и всё исчезало в глазах его… (6:90)

Raskol'nikov has become part of the apparition in the sky detailed in Arkadii Ivanovich's 'vision', part of the city's self-righteous charade; but worse still, he has left everything and everyone behind. Raskol'nikov's 'vision' displays the utter isolation his theory has inflicted on him. He is alone in his stubborn pride, he feels he alone is above everyone else; but he is also alone in his slowly consuming guilt.

As he feels the sensation of flying upwards, of leaving his past behind him, the borders between dream and reality weaken again for Raskol'nikov: 'Прекрасный мир, который все же существует, оказывается для него чужим. У Раскольникова нет путей в этот мир.

> Пройдя свой ежедневный путь, состоящий из узких полутемных переулков и великолепных панорам набережной, герой Достоевского возвращается к себе, к своим мыслям и оказывается в каком-то особом мире. … Трудно сказать, где в нем оканчивается внешняя материальная действительность (изображение Невы, неба, собора) и начинаются субьективные состояния; граница между ними растворяется. … Воспоминания объективируются; все прошлое видится где-то внизу, под ногами, в какой-то глубине. В этой глубине созерцающий природу видит и земную панораму. Тем не менее он улетает вверх, в воздушное пространство, в котором все растворяется. Пейзаж одновременно конкретен, но имеет и общий смысл. Это прежде всего панорама открытого места на реке, которое можно как угодно ограничивать. В то же время это умопостигаемая беспредельность, в которой все конкретные предметы растворяются.[91]

His last refuge, the panorama which brought his ideas into focus, has failed him and, having shunned his family and friends, he has nowhere else to turn. It is not until after he meets Sonia that he realises his only alternative to suicide is repentance. Only then does the fog of dreamlike confusion begin to lift from Raskol'nikov's eyes.

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[91] Касаткин и Касаткина, p. 61

INTENSITY OF REALITY

Dreamlike intensity forms the basis of Dostoevskii's employment of his self-confessed technique of 'fantastic realism' – his view of reality as the wildest fantasy, and the consequent dreamlike nature of reality at these moments: 'знаете ли, что, что бы вы ни написали, что бы ни вывели, что бы ни отметили в художественном произведении, – никогда вы не сравняетесь с действительностью' (23:144), he wrote in his *Дневник писателя* of October 1876. Dostoevskii's extensive use of momentous events in characters' lives painted in dreamlike images is evidence of this. These are the 'точки кризисов' in the narrative, as Bakhtin would have it,[92] powerful scenes of emotion, derangement or scandal where time becomes stretched, actions exaggerated and the implausible likely. Those participating or witnessing the event often cannot believe it is actually happening, and indeed some remark that the whole event is very much like a dream.

Dostoevskii's consistent deployment of fantastic realism means that heightened episodes of dreamlike intensity span the whole of his literary output, and appear in many different guises. The greater part of the text of *Записки из мёртвого дома* is a pertinent, extended example of existential intensity that often makes reality seem unreal. Recalling lying on his prison bed at night, the narrator Gorianchikov says:

> в испуге приподымаю голову и оглядываю спящих моих товарищей при дрожащем тусклом свете шестериковой казенной свечи. Я смотрю на их бедные лица, на их бедные постели, на всю эту непроходимую голь и нищету, – всматриваюсь – и точно мне хочется увериться, что всё это не продолжение безобразного сна, а действительная правда. Но это правда: вот слышится чей-то стон; кто-то тяжело откинул руку и брякнул цепями. (4:130)

An almost polar example to the horror of the prison camp is the winning streak of the gambler in *Игрок*, who loses all concept of the value of the money he makes by staking ever higher: 'Не помню я уж тут ни расчета, ни порядка моих ставок. Помню только, как во сне, что я уже выиграл, кажется, тысяч шестнадцать флоринов […] уж почти ничего не ощущал при этом; я только ждал, как-то механически, без мысли'. (5:293)

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[92] Бахтин, pp. 255-56

However, in Dostoevskii's works this intensity is most often refracted through the prism of St Petersburg, which often plays a bigger role than just a backdrop or setting. Its implications as a magical, transformative factor have already been discussed in terms of the various 'visions' on the River Neva. But the city is itself effective in evoking a dreamlike atmosphere due to its own inherent dreamlike nature. It seems curiously unreal itself.

St Petersburg

'At the heart of the myth of Petersburg,' writes Donald Fanger, 'is the image of an unreal city, an image countenanced historically by the fact of the city's founding as an arbitrary act of will … and countenanced physically, so to speak, by the peculiar Petersburg situation and climate.'[93] The city's northerly latitude means it is subject to both the 'белые ночи' of summer and a pale, weak light which seldom breaks through the short days of winter. Such seasonal persistence or absence of light in itself promotes a dreamlike quality to such a setting.

But Petersburg is also a forced city, built to Peter I's order by the toil and on the bones of thousands of slave workers and convicts. It is a construction of the tsar's Europeanised mind made reality: its meticulously planned wide streets and low buildings give its streets a vast perspective, while its abundance of neo-classical architecture and near-Venetian bridges spanning canals give it a deliberately non-Russian look. '… самый отвлеченный и умышленный город на всем земном шаре' (5:101), the protagonist of *Записки из подполья* dubs it, and this forced intent – along with the tension that is natural to cities, harbouring thousands of people in close proximity – gives rise to an intensity of everyday life that has different effects on characters and atmosphere, more often than not negative ones.

In *Преступление и наказание*, Svidrigailov says: 'Это город полусумасшедших.' He continues:

> я убежден, что в Петербурге много народу, ходя, говорят сами с собой. […] Если б у нас были науки, то медики, юристы, и философы могли бы сделать над Петербургом драгоценнейшие

[93] Fanger, pp. 104-05

> исследования, каждый по своей специальности. Редко где найдется столько мрачных, резких и странных влияний на душу человека, как в Петербурге. Чего стоят одни климатические влияния! Между тем это административный центр всей России, и характер его должен отражаться на всем. (6:357)

This passage in itself explains Raskol'nikov's position – subject as he is to 'странные влияния' and theories – and perhaps even cites him as a typical example of a citizen of Petersburg, as an introvert living in his own reality. His closed consciousness, like that of other residents, is a compartment of the city's collective psyche; and so the city comes to symbolise Jung's collective unconscious – that deepest area of the subconscious, full of elemental experiences, fears, desires and impulses – of which Raskol'nikov is a miniscule part. The city, therefore, reciprocates its inhabitants' conditions: 'The real city … rendered with a striking concreteness, is also a city of the mind in the way that its atmosphere answers Raskolnikov's spiritual condition and almost symbolizes it. It is crowded, stifling, and parched.'[94] Moreover, Raskol'nikov immediately comes across as one of these 'полусумасшедшие' who talk to themselves, isolated in a crowd. Malcolm Jones writes:

> The social disorder is reflected in Raskolnikov's own psychological disorder and his mental confusion. To a considerable extent it is, of course, the occasion if not the cause of it. There is the private disorder of confused and conflicting thoughts and emotions, of vivid, terrifying and grotesque dreams and fantasies, of monologues and dialogues composed of an interminable flow of confused and excited words. Around him is the public disorder of the streets and the Haymarket…[95]

Versilov in *Подросток* also sees something unusual in everyday Petersburg life, which he points out to Arkadii in a down-at-heel tavern similar to that in which Svidrigailov espoused his theory: 'Эта обстановка,' he says, 'всё это до того пошло и прозаично, что граничит почти с фантастическим.' (13:222) This unreality testifies to the intense reality of common Petersburg life.

Petersburg is ultimately a paradox, combining the intensity of reality with its obfuscation. To Arkadii the city can be both intoxicating and sobering; it can create dreams or dissipate them:

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[94] Fanger, p. 194
[95] Malcolm V. Jones, *Dostoyevsky – The Novel of Discord*, Paul Elek, London, 1976, p. 21

> Всякое раннее утро, петербургское в том числе, имеет на природу человека отрезвляющее действие. Иная пламенная ночная мечта, вместе с утренним светом и холодом, совершенно даже испаряется, и мне самому случалось иногда припоминать по утрам иные свои ночные, только что минувшие грезы, а иногда и поступки, с укоризною и стыдом.

Yet he adds: 'считаю петербургское утро, казалось бы самое прозаическое на всем земном шаре, – чуть ли не самым фантастическим в мире.' (13:112-13) Taking this paradox to a more extreme level, St Petersburg, as the capital of an enormous empire, is where dreams of the common man are either made, or, more commonly, crushed. The city's scale only increases the feelings of inferiority in the average citizen:

> The huge scale of its architectural masses and spaces, the extraordinary width of the Neva, the sprawling low profiles of its buildings, the sheer lunacy of a design that transposes the forms of intimate Palladian architecture onto a Brobdignagian scale, all conspire to make its inhabitants, and its visitors, feel crushed and dwarfed.[96]

In addition, Alex de Jonge notes 'the overpowering presence of the sky.

> No doubt because the land upon which it is built is so flat, and the height of its buildings relatively low, the city gives the impression of a sky which seems larger, wider, than usual, and, at the same time, particularly when overcast, there is a very real feeling that the sky weighs down upon one.[97]

In this oppressive atmosphere, the administrative clerks whom Dostoevskii often describes or features as protagonists live in desperately poor conditions. Many of the city's inhabitants live on a day-to-day basis; and perhaps this is the most intense reality of all.

This is the melting pot of despair, destitution and dreams that Dostoevskii finds so inspiring in St Petersburg, just as he found inspiration in the squalor of Dickens's London and Balzac's Paris. It is on the intense pressures of the city that the author based his recurrent theme of the 'little man', the underdog, and the social injustices and dehumanisation he was subject to. As Fanger writes, 'Poverty is thus considered as the destruction of the right of individuality, as the suppression of its

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[96] Alex de Jonge, *Dostoevsky and The Age of Intensity*, Secker & Warburg, London, 1975, pp. 55-56
[97] Ibid., pp. 60-61

potentialities.'[98] And yet the downtrodden masses are held in constant thrall to the *мечта* of riches to which they all aspire: 'poverty is most painful when inaccessible riches are in sight,' states Jacques Catteau.

> The tragedy of the petty clerk is that he is looking at something else, near, everyday and inaccessible. If he were to climb up one grade in the table of ranks, if His Excellency were to notice him or the young daughter of His Excellency suddenly fall in love with him, the brilliant world of the capital would fling open its doors. This is the dream he pursues, sometimes to the point of madness.[99]

Regardless of how 'un-Russian' St Petersburg may or may not be, its intense reality is seen by Dostoevskii as a typically Russian mode of life. In his frequent portrayal of his protagonists' dualism, division and internal contradiction – their passion for extremes – de Jonge outlines the author's dark prophecy for the Russian people:

> Dostoevsky derives … breadth of character, the capacity to derive intensity from both vice and virtue, from quintessential Russianness. …
>
> Dostoevsky can be seen to understand that the Russian character … is the meeting place of extremes, of Myshkin and Rogozhin. The Russian susceptibility to intensity emerges in Ivan Karamazov's observation that Russians have a particular inclination towards sadism. In the Russian capacity for extremism and the sustaining of mutually contradictory attitudes, Dostoevsky glimpses the troubles to come.[100]

This foresight of the 'troubles' of 20th-century Communism is by no means implicit in Dostoevskii's works, but it is a good indication of how subconscious experience and imagery can be linked to wider themes in reality. Certainly, the author thought this intensity could also be harnessed as a force of good, to spread the word of Orthodoxy throughout the world as a 'God-bearing' nation. But for this to happen, the impoverished, unjust intensity of his adopted city would have to be fought and eradicated – and it was perhaps his hope that his many tales of the dreamlike drudgery of the downtrodden classes harboured the seeds of this very effect.

'St Petersburg is thus "the most intentional city" in a double sense,' writes Sidney Monas.

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[98] Fanger, p. 206
[99] Catteau, p. 154
[100] de Jonge, pp. 215-16

> It is the capital, city of conscious intent, sovereign will, itself the product of the Emperor's *fiat*, and from which the Empire is governed; it is also the dream-capital, the city of repressed intent, wishes unfulfilled, the city of poor clerks, impoverished students and ambitious dreamers. Both the natural setting and the architecture – the ensembles of palaces, the mannerist vistas, the watery surroundings, the fogs and tubercular climate, and the tricks of the light of its far northern location – compound its ambivalences.[101]

This two-facedness of the city consequently puts its very existence in doubt. Bakhtin writes: 'Петербург… на границе бытия и небытия, реальности и фантасмагории, которая вот-вот рассеется, как туман, и сгинет. И Петербург как бы лишен внутренних оснований для оправданной стабилизации, и он – на пороге.'[102]

Monas has noted how these two shifting poles of the city are echoed in the symbolism of *Двойник*, a Petersburg 'поэма' that fully relies on illusion and distortion. Fittingly, there is an abundant use of mirroring, 'the watery element of rivers, harbour and canals that mirrors reveries; dreams, hallucinations, illusions, lies, tall tales (*vran'yo*), inventions, projections – these are the stock-in-trade, the *topoi* of the Petersburg tale.'[103] Dostoevskii employs a technique of 'smoke and mirrors' to elevate the events that occur in the city to an intense, dreamlike state of existence on the brink. At any moment it could disappear – as Arkadii Ivanovich and, indeed, Dostoevskii himself both recognise in their 'visions' on the Neva – and, along with it, Dostoevskii's tales of the 1840s, the twilit existence of many of which lend them a certain brittle fragility.

In addition, as Fanger states, Dostoevskii's portrayal of the city tends to be conveyed through character. Consequently, the Petersburg of his early *мечтатели* protagonists seems like just another construct of their dreams. 'This is one reason why his Petersburg, the physical place with all its spectral inhabitants, its buildings, canals, bridges, and streetlamps, seems so perpetually on the point of evanescence.'[104]

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[101] Sidney Monas, 'Across the threshold: *The Idiot* as a Petersburg tale', in *New Essays on Dostoyevsky*, eds. Malcolm V. Jones and Garth M. Terry, Cambridge University Press, 1983, p. 70
[102] Бахтин, p. 288
[103] Monas, 'Across the threshold', in Jones and Terry (eds.), pp. 68-69
[104] Fanger, pp. 131-32. Fanger also relates this theory of the character-built city to Dostoevskii's own walks around the city, during which he ruminated on his works. It is no stretch of the imagination to

This is also the main reason why, while *Преступление и наказание* may in many ways be viewed as Dostoevskii's Petersburg tale *par excellence*, it lacks this sense of fragility that is much more evident in earlier works. This is in large part due to the text's philosophical robustness, which derives from the influence of *Записки из подполья* (1864). It is from that novel onwards that Dostoevskii's works move into mature tragedy, and he consequently portrays the ultimate fate of the city's inhabitants, trapped between its poles of dreamlike intensity: his *мечтатели*, his downtrodden citizens, and his immoral 'spiders'. Dostoevskii's many suicides in his later works 'kill themselves because they have exhausted all their resources and have nothing left.'[105] From *Записки из подполья* onwards, the city is tarnished and filthy with disease and vice, and contains little of its former romantic grandeur.

Fittingly, then, the work in which dreamlike intensity is perhaps most ever-presently realised is *Униженные и оскорбленные* (1861), which just predates the Underground Man. After his notes from the 'dead house', this was Dostoevskii's first major work following his Siberian exile yet, despite its date, the novel continues in the vein of his works of the 1840s. In fact, in many ways it is Dostoevskii's swan song to – and culmination of – this style of narrative, with its Romantic, occasionally gothic stylings and its portrayal of the destitute and the city's *мечтатели*; of which the novel's protagonist and narrator, Ivan Petrovich, is undoubtedly one.

Ivan Petrovich

Dostoevskii's *мечтатель*, we recall, appears to be a type unique to the dark corners of St Petersburg – and it is here too where the aspiring writer Ivan Petrovich resides, and from where the dreamlike episodes of the novel precipitate.

Like the *мечтатель* Ordynov, all of Ivan's dreamlike impressions are clouded by an illness which induces fever and delirium to varying degrees. Yet in *Униженные и оскорбленные* illness is an ever-present condition that affects the work throughout.

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conclude that certain characters could consequently have come to be associated with certain locations of the city. Fanger later turns this on its head when he says Dostoevskii's characters are exclusively unique to the St Petersburg of his own devising. 'One might still meet and recognize a Vronsky on any street today; a Raskolnikov could be met and recognized only in Dostoevsky's Petersburg, could only breathe its air.' (p. 266)

[105] de Jonge, p. 122

The reader is made immediately aware of Ivan's ailment from the opening paragraph: 'Еще с утра я чувствовал себя нездоровым, а к закату солнца мне стало даже и очень нехорошо: начиналось что-то вроде лихорадки. К тому же я целый день был на ногах и устал.' (3:169) Ivan never seems to fully recuperate during the novel, and indeed, only a few pages in, the reader discovers that his condition is apparently terminal and he is writing his reminisces from his hospital bed. From the outset, Dostoevskii, through Ivan, even admits that he is using illness as a narrative technique – 'Впрочем, я был болен; а болезненные ощущения почти всегда бывают обманчивы.' (3:170)

The difference from 'Хозяйка' is that, where Ordynov's illness obfuscates, Ivan's tends to illuminate. Through this feverish, dreamlike atmosphere, St Petersburg appears suitably fantastical, a point again made on the novel's opening page as a ray of spring sunshine cuts through the city's gloom:

> Вся улица вдруг блеснет, облитая ярким светом. Все дома как будто вдруг засверкают. Серые, желтые и грязно-зеленые цвета их потеряют на миг всю свою угрюмость; как будто на душе прояснеет, как будто вздрогнешь или кто-то подтолкнет тебя локтем. Новый взгляд, новые мысли… Удивительно, что может сделать один луч солнца с душой человека!

The 'странные влияния' of the city – its incongruous architecture, social conditions, climate – all coalesce here. They seem to bring clarity to Ivan's vision, initially clouded by illness, and are rendered even sharper by the text's use of the present tense. However, such strikingly vivid imagery of the city retains a distinct unreality: suddenly 'вся улица вдруг блеснет', 'все дома засверкают' from the 'угрюмость', suggesting some sort of magical transformation.

The novel's events begin to unfold in this almost enchanted atmosphere, upon Ivan's encounter with Ieremiia Smit and his dog Azorka. Suitably, Ivan has an almost instinctual presentiment that something unusual is afoot, seemingly even before he sees the old man: 'я вдруг остановился как вкопанный и стал смотреть на ту сторону улицы, как будто предчувствуя, что вот сейчас со мной случится что-то необыкновенное… Я очень хорошо помню, что сердце мое сжалось от какого-то неприятнейшего ощущения и я сам не мог решить, какого рода было

это ощущение.' (3:170)[106] Then, following the encounter with Smit in the confectioner's and witnessing his subsequent death in a nearby alley, Ivan notes: 'Мне казалось, что всё это происходит во сне.' (3:176)

A dreamlike scenario is therefore the instigation for the story, as the death of Smit – an intensely unreal moment, charged with presentiment and the blurred impressions of Ivan's illness – draws Smit's granddaughter Nelli to Ivan. Writing almost a year later in hospital, Ivan's recollection of events naturally seems even more dreamlike. In addition, the effects of St Petersburg life – the sad death of an old immigrant and his dog – once again provide fertile ground for subconscious imagery, which is so pivotal to the city's narratives for Dostoevskii.

All of these techniques and effects of unreal, dreamlike intensity coalesce in the scene that introduces Nelli. It is a passage of dark, gothic atmosphere. Having moved into Smit's apartment, Ivan experiences more sensations of foreboding and unease, as if the room is haunted by the old man's spirit. Unable to write, his thoughts turn towards mortality as the day of sleet and rain outside turns slowly to night. Then, upon remembering that he is to meet his lost love Natasha that evening, he is suddenly overcome with a desire to get out of his lodgings: 'Мне и без того хотелось вырваться поскорей из квартиры хоть куда-нибудь, хоть на дождь, на слякоть.' Ivan continues: 'По мере того как наступала темнота, комната моя становилась как будто просторнее, как будто она всё более и более расширялась. Мне вообразилось, что я каждую ночь в каждом углу буду видеть Смита'. (3:207)

Ivan then digresses slightly in an attempt to further explain this almost supernatural unease, an almost primal, instinctual reaction to his dark surroundings that he dubs 'мистический ужас'. He explains:

> Это – самая тяжелая, мучительная боязнь чего-то, чего я сам определить не могу, чего-то непостигаемого и несуществующего в порядке вещей, но что непременно, может быть сию же минуту,

[106] Such presentiment is not an isolated occurrence in the novel. For example, Ivan experiences a similar deja-vu type experience on his way to see his foster parents, the Ikhmenevs, and their daughter, his childhood love Natasha. When Natasha tells Ivan she is leaving her parents to live with her beloved Alesha, Ivan notes: 'Всё это я предчувствовал, еще идя к ним; всё это уже представлялось мне, как в тумане, еще, может быть, задолго до этого дня.' (3:195)

> осуществится, как бы в насмешку всем доводам разума придет ко мне и станет передо мною как неотразимый факт, ужасный, безобразный и неумолимый. Боязнь эта возрастает обыкновенно всё сильнее и сильнее, несмотря ни на какие доводы рассудка, так что наконец ум, несмотря на то что приобретает в эти минуты, может быть, еще большую ясность, тем не менее лишается всякой возможности противодействовать ощущениям. Его не слушаются, он становится бесполезен, и это раздвоение еще больше усиливает пугливую тоску ожидания. Мне кажется, такова отчасти тоска людей, боящихся мертвецов. Но в моей тоске неопределенность опасности еще более усиливает мучения. (3:208)

Such an indefinable experience can be simply accounted for as existential angst, a fear of mortality. By extension, and taking into account Ivan's recurrent forebodings and foresight, this *мистический ужас* may be an unconscious premonition, as his illness worsens, of his own fate of dying in hospital. As if to comfort himself by offering up a rational explanation, he ascribes it to various factors: 'от расстройства ли нерв, от новых ли впечатлений в новой квартире, от недавней ли хандры' (3:207-08). But these feelings then take form in an overwhelming certainty that he will be visited by Smit – again, a foreboding of the incarnation of death: 'Всё это привидение чрезвычайно ярко и отчетливо нарисовалось внезапно в моем воображении, а вместе с тем вдруг установилась во мне самая полная, самая неотразимая уверенность, что всё это непременно, неминуемо случится, что это уж и случилось' (3:208).

To a degree this vision does indeed come to pass, as Nelli, Smit's granddaughter, enters the room. But even her timid appearance is imbued with hallmarks of suspenseful, gothic horror, as Ivan's door slowly opens and he notes: 'если б это был даже сам Смит, то и он бы, может быть, не так испугал меня, как это странное, неожиданное появление незнакомого ребенка в моей комнате в такой час и в такое время.' (3:208)

The lengthening shadows of a Petersburg dusk; a darkening room belonging to an old man not long ago deceased; the appearance of a grimly destitute young girl behind a slowly opening door (the only physical action described in this whole scene); the existential impressions of a feverishly ill writer and *мечтатель*: all of these effects, along with an almost palpable existential angst, combine to produce a passage of undoubtedly powerful subconscious imagery.

Ivan's distorted impressions are the key factor here, heightening the tension of the scene in a display of dreamlike intensity. Indeed, the psychic power of this passage almost seems to make its physical event happen: Ivan's intense yet intangible feelings of *мистический ужас*, heightened by his illness, lead to a more tangible vision or premonition of Smit, which is in turn partially fulfilled by the actual appearance of his granddaughter, Nelli. In this way, subconscious processes and subconscious imagery can be said to precipitate action in the text.

The development of Ivan's subsequent relationship with Nelli extends this intensely unreal chain of events that began with the death of Smit. 'Он мне во сне снится', Ivan confesses to her, and adds: 'как будто тебя мне на руки оставлял' (3:255). Dreams here form the basis of the protagonist's actions, in this case a sense of subconsciously transmitted responsibility for Nelli's well-being. But his devotion towards the girl remains as ultimately unexplainable as his initial feelings of *мистический ужас*: 'В чувстве моем было еще что-то другое, кроме одной жалости. Таинственность ли всей обстановки, впечатление ли, произведенное Смитом, фантастичность ли моего собственного настроения, – не знаю, но что-то непреодолимо влекло меня к ней.' (3:255)

Perhaps it is simply Nelli's fantastic nature that is the source of attraction. Beyond the unreal intensity of the scene when she is introduced to the novel, she shows further attributes of an almost supernatural inhumanity: her strange, almost instinctual actions formed as a matter of necessity through her destitute upbringing; an indefinable look in her eyes; and her almost vision-like appearances during Ivan's extended period of feverish delirium: 'всё это я помню как сквозь сон, как в тумане, и милый образ бедной девочки мелькал передо мной среди забытья, как виденье, как картинка' (3:294). In a later scene, when Ivan finds Nelli after she has run away, she is portrayed as if something from a nightmare: 'Только что я стал под ворота, вдруг от самого фонаря бросилась на меня какая-то странная фигура, так что я даже вскрикнул, какое-то живое существо, испуганное, дрожащее, полусумасшедшее, и с криком уцепилось за мои руки. Ужас охватил меня. Это была Нелли!' (3:338-39)

This idea of Nelli as some sort of psychic projection, a living nightmare or vision, carries further weight when she tells Ivan of her torturous upbringing, which he calls a ‘мрачный кошмар’. In this case, however, she is not a projection of Ivan’s subconscious, but that of one tiny, hidden, dark corner of Petersburg’s collective psyche, a product of the city’s harshly intense reality – just as she seems to emerge from the streets, ‘от фонаря’ in the passage above. Ivan says:

> Мрачная это была история, одна из тех мрачных и мучительных историй, которые так часто и неприметно, почти таинственно, сбываются под тяжелым петербургским небом, в темных, потаенных закоулках огромного города, среди взбалмошного кипения жизни, тупого эгоизма, сталкивающихся интересов, угрюмого разврата, сокровенных преступлений, среди всего этого кромешного ада бессмысленной и ненормальной жизни… (3:300)

This passage ably verifies the importance of St Petersburg in Dostoevskii’s imagination, in its capacity for reality so harsh, gloomy and intense that it becomes unreal. It also marks the death knell of his romantic love for the city in his fiction: his subsequent works will go on to paint even bleaker images of the consequences of intensity of city life, in, for example, the Underground Man, and the Marmeladov family in *Преступление и наказание*. This gloom is the flipside of the capital’s glittering palaces and imperial grandeur. In Dostoevskii’s Petersburg there seems to be little in between these poles of intense, dreamlike unreality.

By the end of *Униженные и оскорбленные*, the principal characters are all drawn together and interconnected in a web woven by the first of Dostoevskii’s immoral sensualists, the scheming Prince Valkovskii, who is found to be Nelli’s father. While the tying up of plotlines comes across as a little amateurish by Dostoevskii’s standards, it does contribute to the dreamlike quality of the novel, in everyone’s connectivity to everyone else and that, once again, in St Petersburg anything can happen.

Dostoevskii’s technique of dreamlike intensity is underscored by some of the last words in the text, spoken by Natasha: ‘Ваня, ведь это был сон… Всё, всё… всё, за весь этот год.’ (3:442) A ‘сон’, that is, remembered by an invalid in hospital, whose impressions at the time were far from reliable due to his variably feverish states. The textual layers here add more obfuscation.

It must also be noted that the characters of *Униженные и оскорбленные* in general seem palely drawn, not just in comparison to the great figures of world literature Dostoevskii was to go on to create, but also many of his characters of the 1840s. Once again, while perhaps stylistically light in weight, these almost ghostlike characters only add to the novel's dreamlike atmosphere.

This is certainly borne through the protagonist-narrator, a *мечтатель* who, quite in character, focuses on the fantastic, dreamlike experiences that befall him. Despite being the novel's narrator, Ivan himself remains a stubbornly difficult character to discern, acting mostly as a simple witness to the actions of others. Fanger describes him as 'only a shadow, an instrument of the intrigue and of the intriguers'[107]. Rather than providing insights into his own *мечтательный* character, the moments of imagery of the subconscious that he experiences tend to be devices for moving the plot forward. In this sense they are no less important as they mark major turning points in the text. But the fact that this imagery does not significantly contribute to characterisation in this novel is apparent when compared to Dostoevskii's other works; to a degree *Униженные и оскорбленные* suffers from its lack of psychological depth.

For Fanger this is a deliberate ploy by Dostoevskii to symbolise the downfall of the *мечтатель*. *Униженные и оскорбленные*, in his mind, is less a nostalgic look back at the 1840s than a damning critique of *мечтательность*. Ivan is ultimately powerless to effectively interfere in any of the plot lines: Natasha's heart is broken, and will not yield to Ivan's; Nelli, though happier at the novel's end, dies; but the schemes of the immoral sensualist Prince Valkovskii come to full fruition. The face of evil has won. That is why, says Fanger, 'the hero of the forties is only a parody of a hero. … With all his feverish activity, he loses everything that is dear to him, and we learn early in the book that he is writing these memoirs "lying alone on a hospital bed, forsaken by all whom I loved so much and so intensely".' He continues:

> Failure had always been Dostoevsky's theme; what constitutes the novelty of this treatment of it is the presence of one character – Valkovsky – who is the architect of all the personal failures in the book, the single exponent of a ruthless immoralism before which no

[107] Fanger, p. 175

> sentimental goodness can stand. … he characterizes Ivan Petrovich's weakness, playing with him, as the latter notes, like a cat with a mouse…
>
> Fittingly, it is Valkovsky who is the most boldly-conceived character here, while the hopes and dreams of others are extinguished in his shadow.

Fanger concludes that the novel 'heralds an end to Dostoevsky's own Schillerism and the appearance in his work of the problem of evil'[108]. Nevertheless, this lack of psychological depth of the lead characters – alongside the first fictional incarnation of Dostoevskii's nightmarish 'spider' in Valkovskii – could be construed as yet another effect of Ivan Petrovich's illness that swathes the atmosphere of the story in dreaminess: 'ты болен, у тебя нервы расстроены, такие всё мечты,' (3:231) Natasha says to Ivan at one point. In this novel, the *мечты* of the *мечтатель* – desire for literary success and happiness with Natasha – are based in reality, albeit a highly stylised, dreamlike, intense reality that may well be a dream itself. For if Ivan is writing all this in hospital, might the text not simply be the fanciful daydreams of a terminal patient?

Dostoevskii

It is possible to find Dostoevskii's own version of the 'continuity hypothesis', analogous to the sliding scale of the subconscious mode, in the teachings of Father Zosima. He says, 'всё как океан, всё течет и соприкасается, в одном месте тронешь – в другом конце мира отдается.' (14:290) On the basis of reality this could even be construed as basic chaos theory; on a subconscious level, we find the same water-based imagery of the 'preconscious stream'. This inter-connectedness forms a fundamental base for Zosima's teachings, and prompts his instruction to his novice Alesha Karamazov to love the earth, the birds, animals and trees. In an ethos that approaches karma, this love will be acknowledged and reciprocated and will grow. It is also what underlies Zosima's great credo that 'each is guilty for all'[109]. It shows the breadth of Dostoevskii's philosophic vision that his theories could work on both a moral-spiritual plane and also that of dreamlike reality.

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[108] Ibid. pp. 175-77

[109] Said or quoted by Zosima in various different forms. See 14:149, 262, 270, 275, 290. However, the phrase most commonly used is stated by Dmitrii Karamazov: 'все за всех виноваты'. (15:31)

However, identifying episodes of dreamlike reality that Dostoevskii experienced is rather difficult, as so much of these occurrences are tied up with other phenomena such as hallucinations and particularly epilepsy. In fact, the author's own experiences of confused, dreamlike states are almost exclusively a result of his epileptic condition, as will be discussed later. However, some of the writer's experiences of different types of dreamlike reality as manifested in his works can be isolated from other phenomena.

There are, firstly, a number of parallels that can be drawn between Ordynov and Dostoevskii, particularly concerning *мечтательность*. The first is manifest in the previously quoted passage where the narrator explains Ordynov's obsession with his *мечта*:

> она выживалась в нем годами, и в душе его уже мало-помалу восставал еще темный, неясный, но как-то дивно-отрадный образ идеи, воплощенной в новую, просветленную форму, и эта форма просилась из души его, терзая эту душу […] Но срок воплощения и создания был еще далек, может быть, очень далек, может быть, совсем невозможен! (1:266)

This passionate passage of prose is quite out of character for the narrator of 'Хозяйка', who generally remains discreet throughout the text. It could, therefore, be attributable to Dostoevskii himself. Indeed, the whole concept of Ordynov's 'система' may be a reference to Dostoevskii's own aim to find 'что значит человек и жизнь' (28/1:63) – a quite impossible task, the pursuit of which has been 'темный, неясный, но как-то дивно-отрадный' for myriad artists and philosophers, including Dostoevskii himself, despite its unattainable ('невозможен') nature. This *мечта* also links Ordynov to Dostoevskii's *мечтатели*, and by extension to the *мечтатель* Dostoevskii himself. The narrator of *Белые ночи* says he is in love (*влюблен*) 'в идеал […] Я создаю в мечтах целые романы.' (2:107)

Further parallels between author and character can be drawn in terms of their artistic inspiration. Dostoevskii read, studied and wrote devotedly and feverishly, giving himself over to the world of ideas as completely as Ordynov does. The author too found great inspiration in St Petersburg, and often wandered its streets aimlessly for hours, much like Ordynov (and Raskol'nikov). Both author and character used these wanderings to fuel their futile quest for their *мечты*. But while Dostoevskii was to

achieve a moment of ultimate insight into his goal – his 'vision on the Neva', which tempered his Schillerian romanticism with a tragic Gogolian reality – Ordynov seems doomed to remain in the gloom of confused, unexpressed and inexpressible ideas. Like his *мечтатель* cousins, his search for a 'совсем невозможен' ideal can only mean he is destined for disappointment and isolation in reality.

'Хозяйка' is therefore a stronger condemnation of the *мечтатель* than Dostoevskii's other early works, and it is clear why Bem was the first of several to see the *мечтатель* Ordynov as the progenitor of the Underground Man. But Ordynov's greater isolation from reality imbues him with greater tragedy: 'в отличие от «подпольного человека» – «мечтатель» не осознал еще себя, не создал своей философии подполья, а поэтому беспомощен перед лицом действительности.'[110] Bem ultimately sees Dostoevskii's own *мечтательность* as the basis of Ordynov's illness and its subsequent displays of powerful subconscious imagery:

> «Мечтательство» Достоевского есть тот душевный фон, который им перенесен в психологию Ордынова, без которого не может быть понята и душевная болезнь его. Поэтому, если мы хотим в дальнейшем показать, как Достоевский использовал внутренний мир своих переживаний, перевоплотив их в «Хозяйке», то нам надлежит вскрыть и ту почву, которая дала всходы болезненным цветам его фантазии.[111]

We can also tentatively draw a parallel with Dostoevskii's relationship with his own father in Ordynov's dream of the 'wicked' old man, who takes his mother away from him forever. Tentatively, because the exact nature of this relationship has by no means ever been certain, and many accounts are either coloured by personal bias or reliance on a body of myths that has grown up around the Dostoevskii family history. However, we can assume the certainty of basic facts: that the young Fedor was closer to his mother than his father;[112] that his father imposed a strict educational regime on his children;[113] and that it was he who sent Fedor and Mikhail to military academy in

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[110] Бем, 'Драматизация бреда', in *О Достоевском*, *I*, p. 78
[111] Ibid., p. 97
[112] 'Dostoevsky always spoke of his mother with great warmth and affection,' writes Frank (*The Seeds of Revolt*, p. 14), in comparison with the formal and often terse letters he wrote to his father.
[113] 'They [the Dostoevsky children] learned to read almost as soon as they were out of the cradle, and were instructed either by tutors who came to the house or by their elder brothers or sisters; there was

St Petersburg to pursue a career in the service and not in literature, which had been the brothers' longing.[114]

The parallels with Ordynov's dream then become clearer. While Dr Dostoevskii may not have taken his children's mother away from them like the old man in the dream, any child would rail at the 'injustice' of the kindly parent being 'removed' as opposed to the disciplinarian; it may even lead to the death of the former being unjustly blamed on the latter. The 'corruption' of the young Ordynov/Dostoevskii can be taken as the introduction of cold experience of reality to his life, in opposition to the literary world the young Fedor preferred. This is the 'первый медленный яд горя и слез' that enters Dostoevskii's world, which 'отогнал рои светлых духов' of his literary dreams, and then gathers force when he is expected to give up his literary ambitions for the military academy. Yet there was little chance of disobeying his father[115] and, fittingly, the dream states: 'он смутно чувствовал, как неведомый старик держит во власти своей все его грядущие годы' (1:279); his father was in control of his fate.

These simple parallels allow us to better understand another level of Bem's notion of 'драматизация бреда': 'Если «Хозяйка» есть в значительной мере реализованный во вне бред Ордынова, то *содержание этого бреда, его материал, творчески переработанный и художественно оформленный, был не задан, а дан уже в душе его автора*.'[116] Bem feels that, in addition to the story's basis in Dostoevskii's *мечтательность*, there is a natural link between imagery of the subconscious as experienced by Ordynov, and Dostoevskii's own subconscious; in this case the parallels confirm it. The fact that such parallels seem most evident in Ordynov's dream, his 'deepest' level of subconscious activity, show that, in this case, subconscious imagery has driven right down to elemental feelings; there is less

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no lengthy period of respite in their lives when they could simply indulge in the carefree pleasures and irresponsibilities of childhood. … though their father did not terrorize them physically, his impatient vigilance constantly hung over their heads as a threat.' (Frank, *The Seeds of Revolt*, pp. 23-25)

[114] Ibid., p. 37

[115] 'The post of military engineer offered solid financial advantages … and Dr. Dostoevsky no doubt believed he was doing the best he possibly could for his offspring. Feodor was thus compelled by necessity to envisage a future that went deeply against the grain of his temperament and interests' (Ibid., p. 38) It must be borne in mind that the wage of a medical doctor at that time was only barely sufficient to keep a family.

[116] Бем, 'Драматизация бреда', in *О Достоевском*, *I*, p. 95

ambiguity than might be experienced in Ordynov's dreamlike confusion; here we can gain better insight into characterological drives, both Ordynov's and Dostoevskii's.

From the extensive non-fiction written by and about him, it is clear that Dostoevskii, particularly in his later years, revelled in life. He seemed to live and experience life as if he was intrinsically connected to every single peak of joy and trough of despair that befell him – of which even the most basic scan of his biography reveals there were many. The greater proportion of these experiences may well have been negative, but the writer seemed to draw as much strength from despair as he did from happiness; perhaps even more. This is the essence of what he termed 'живая жизнь', of embracing all of life's experiences.

It is through this close connection with the vitality of life that Dostoevskii was able to convey a certain intensity in his novels, and a stretching of reality to its extreme of 'fantastic realism'. Although this intensity of Dostoevskii's cannot be recorded exactly in the same way as, for example, dreams, there are a number of instances where he expresses this connectivity, or the more observant of his peers recognise it in him. His close acquaintance Nikolai Nikolaevich Strakhov, for example, gives a striking account of how Dostoevskii tapped into this intensity of reality through his enthusiasm for knowledge – both old and new – and his instinctive ability to give form to consequent ideas. In his biography, Strakhov remembers of Dostoevskii 'его необыкновенный ум, быстрота, с которою он схватывал всякую мысль, по одному слову и намеку'[117]. He also comments:

> Мысли самые общие и отвлеченные нередко действовали на него с большою силою, и он воодушевлялся ими чрезвычайно. Вообще он был человек в высокой степени восторженный и впечатлительный. Простая мысль, иногда давно известная и обыкновенная, вдруг зажигала его, являясь ему во всей своей значительности. Он, так сказать, необыкновенно живо *чувствовал мысли*. Тогда он высказывал ее в различных видах, давал ей иногда очень резкое, образное выражение, хотя и не разъяснял логически, не развертывал ее содержания. Прежде всего он был все-таки художник, мыслил образами и руководился чувствами.[118]

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[117] Тюнькин (ed.), *Ф. М. Достоевский в воспоминаниях современников*, 1, p. 423
[118] Ibid., p. 392

There are occasions when Dostoevskii, as if marvelling at the intensity of life, compares it to a dream: 'Вся поездка в Москву представляется мне как сквозь сон' (28/2:8); 'Наше время пролетело, как мечта' (29/2:124). Such statements seem to be born of a feeling that was only awakened within Dostoevskii after his arrest, or, more precisely, in the moment of the tsar's reprieve as he faced execution. Extracts from Dostoevskii's final letter to his brother Mikhail before he was sent into exile already convey the extent of this awakening, just hours after the reprieve:

> Брат! Я не уныл и не упал духом. Жизнь везде жизнь, жизнь в нас самих, а не во внешнем. […] быть *человеком* между людьми и остаться им навсегда, в каких бы то ни было несчастьях, не уныть и не пасть – вот в чем жизнь, в чем задача ее. Я сознал это. Эта идея вошла в плоть и кровь мою. Да правда! […] во мне осталось сердце и та же плоть и кровь, которая также может и любить, и страдать, и желать, и помнить, а это все-таки жизнь! On voit le soleil! […] Никогда еще таких обильных и здоровых запасов духовной жизни не кипело во мне, как теперь. […] Жизнь – дар, жизнь – счастье, каждая минута могла быть веком счастья. Si jeunesse savait! Теперь, переменяя жизнь, перерождаюсь в новую форму. (28/1:162-164)

There is no mention of any such dreamlike intensity of life before his arrest. Yet it was this newfound appreciation for living that, in all likelihood, helped Dostoevskii survive four years in a tsarist prison camp. Upon release, this feeling seemed to become even stronger. In a letter to his brother Andrei shortly afterwards, he compares the whole prison experience to a purgatory which led to a spiritual awakening to life, a 'resurrection':

> те 4 года считаю я за время, в которое я был похоронен живой и закрыт в гробу. Что за ужасное было это время, не в силах я рассказать тебе, друг мой. Это было страдание невыразимое, бесконечное, потому что всякий час, всякая минута тяготела как камень у меня на душе. […] Но это время прошло, и теперь оно сзади меня, как тяжелый сон, так же как выход из каторги представлялся мне прежде, как светлое пробуждение и воскресение в новую жизнь. (28/1:181)

It is this experience that has confirmed to him the need for this purgatory in life, as part of the path to happiness and salvation. Man needs both extremes, both 'pro and contra', as he writes in his notes for *Преступление и наказание*:

> Нет счастья в комфорте, покупается счастье страданием. Таков закон нашей планеты, но это непосредственное сознание,

> чувствуемое житейским процессом, – есть такая великая радость, за которую можно заплатить годами страдания.
>
> Человек не родится для счастья. Человек заслуживает свое счастье, и всегда страданием.
>
> Тут нет никакой несправедливости, ибо жизненное знание и сознание (т.е. непосредственно чувствуемое телом и духом, т.е. жизненным всем процессом) приобретается опытом pro и contra, которое нужно перетащить на себе. (7:154-155)

Critically, these thoughts come under the heading of 'ИДЕЯ РОМАНА' and are prefaced by the statement, 'ПРАВОСЛАВНОЕ ВОЗЗРЕНИЕ, В ЧЕМ ЕСТЬ ПРАВОСЛАВИЕ'. Such a philosophy on life obviously runs to the core of the story of Raskol'nikov; and it was such feelings that, despite his extreme despair, undoubtedly enabled Dostoevskii to endure the many hardships in his own life – some of them of his own doing, such as his extreme debts incurred by his roulette mania. De Jonge postulates that he brought on these hardships deliberately, if unconsciously: 'Dostoevsky, who tended to thrive on threatening deadlines and quasi-induced financial crises, was himself a victim of the craving for intensity.'[119] Yet other critics indicate that there was a sense of intent in this self-destructive tendency, a 'dialectic of creativity and self-destruction'[120]. Louis Breger writes:

> By assuming an excessive burden of debt and obligation – by suffering poverty, humiliation, illness, and rejection – he did penance for his anger. … At the same time that he described his life torn apart by death and failure, he spoke of the curious feeling that he was about to be reborn. He had a sense that his writing would take him beyond his guilty, self-punishing state.[121]

Such moments gave the author an inspirational boost that left its imprint in the melodramatic style his novels sometimes displayed.

One disaster he could not avoid, however, was the death of his firstborn child, his baby daughter Sonia, in Geneva. Yet it is clear that such moments of intense sadness were also ones of inspiration. Anna Grigor'evna highlights a passage from *Вечный муж* – in which Vel'chaninov visits the grave of his illegitimate daughter Liza – that

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[119] de Jonge, p. 143
[120] Rice, p. 65
[121] Louis Breger, *Dostoevsky, The Author as Psychoanalyst*, New York University Press, New York and London, 1989, p. 17

hints at her husband's feelings over this tragedy, and also draws a direct line between his experience and his fiction.

> Был ясный вечер, солнце закатывалось; кругом, около могил, росла сочная зеленая трава … Какая-то даже надежда в первый раз после долгого времени освежила ему сердце. – «Как легко!»' – подумал он, чуствуя эту тишину кладбища и глядя на ясное, спокойное небо. Прилив какой-то чистой, безмятежной веры во что-то наполнил ему душу. – «Это Лиза послала мне, это она говорит со мной», подумалось ему. (9:63)

In a marginal note of her 1906 edition of Dostoevskii's complete works, Anna writes: 'Подобное ощущение испытал Феодор Михайлович, когда в 1868 году пришел в первый раз после похорон своей дочери Сони на ее могилку. «Соня послала мне это спокойствие», – сказал он мне.'[122] The powerfully symbolic, dreamlike moment of the setting sun is a familiar backdrop for many other striking subconscious episodes in Dostoevskii's fiction: for example, in the childhood memories of Alesha Karamazov and Father Zosima; the perfect image of humanity found in the dreams of the 'Golden Age'; and at the moment of Liza's death.

Dostoevskii's two surviving children, however, gave him great joy. In fact, children in general filled his spirit with a powerful, 'humanising' element, as he writes to Anna Pavlovna Filosofova in 1879: 'Как хорошо, что у вас есть они – сколько очеловечивают они существование в высшем смысле.' (30:78) This is another example of the profound importance the author placed in children and a healthy upbringing, which became an increasingly prominent feature in his later works.

Ultimately, Dostoevskii's favourite image of the dreamlike intensity of reality was that of the condemned man being taken to the gallows, derived from Victor Hugo's *Le Dernier Jour d'un condamné* (1829). This image, and the thoughts of the condemned man, are meticulously analysed by Prince Myshkin in *Идиот*, and comprise Dostoevskii's most detailed account of his own experiences as he was taken to his execution – for he left no personal account of his own journey towards the firing squad in 1849. He does, however, hint at some of his own feelings after witnessing the execution of the revolutionary Ippolit Mlodetskii on February 22,

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[122] In Л. П. Гроссман, *Семинарий по Достоевскому*, Prideaux Press, Letchworth, 1972, pp. 60-61

1880,[123] on Semenovskii Square, where he too had faced death. A day after the execution, Dostoevskii is reported to have said among company:

> в такую минуту человек старается отогнать мысль о смерти, ему припоминаются большею частью отрадные картины, его переносит в какой-то жизненный сад, полный весны и солнца. И чем ближе к концу, тем неотвязнее и мучительнее становится представление неминуемой смерти. Предстоящая боль, предсмертные страдания не страшны: ужасен переход в другой, неизвестный образ.[124]

It was as a result of this brush with death, along with the intense symptoms of his epilepsy, that 'Dostoevsky was indelibly marked by his own experience of the super-saturated moment', writes de Jonge. 'It was this that gave him the insight and understanding which enabled him to recreate the experience of intensity and its opposite, this also which made him a compulsive gambler and the literary master of the cliff-hanger.'[125] Peaks of dreamlike intensity in life became the basis of his style.

Following Dostoevskii's mock execution, he was given much time to ruminate over the experience and how life had been practically 'returned' to him. It was this extraordinary episode in the author's life and his subsequent years in the Omsk stockade that led to what many claim was his 'conversion' of sorts. One moment of blinding, intense, unreality had given way to years of prolonged intensity amid people he could not relate to – though his 'conversion' to faith in the Russian *народ* seemed to change this.

Frank is probably the most enthusiastic and detailed investigator of this conversion claim, citing psychiatric and neuropsychological sources (including Pavlov) that indicate the conditions were exactly right for such a process to take place within Dostoevskii's subconscious.[126] These were, namely, a guilt over his crime towards the supreme moral and religious leader (the tsar), and also from his un-Christian aversion to the coarse peasant convicts; and the variety of physical and emotional stress that he had to endure in prison – including hunger, fatigue, illness, fear, abuse (physical and mental), humiliation and isolation. According to Frank, 'all these

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[123] For a failed assassination attempt on Count M. T. Loris-Melikov, president of the Supreme Executive Committee for state security.
[124] In Н. Ф. Буданова и Г. М. Фридлендер (eds.), *Летопись жизни и творчества Ф. М. Достоевского*, Академический Проект, 1995, vol. 3, p. 385
[125] de Jonge, p. 144
[126] Frank, *The Years of Ordeal*, pp. 116-127

factors, dislocating the conditioned reflex patterns of the brain, make the subject receptive to the formation of new patterns and hence amenable to new ideas'. This comes about through nervous exhaustion and mental collapse ('transmarginal inhibition'), leading to the brain being susceptible to the establishment of new brain patterns and new ways of thinking. While no mental breakdown is described by Dostoevskii or other sources, Frank posits that the onset of full-blown epilepsy in the author at this point in his life served the same role – the brain, indeed, overloads and temporarily shuts down during a seizure. Frank writes that 'such attacks would have greatly heightened Dostoevsky's nervous fragility and psychic-emotive malleability.

> Epilepsy, clinically speaking, is the overloading of the brain with stimuli to the point of convulsion; it is an illness that produces exactly the state of 'transmarginal inhibition' of which Pavlov spoke. … Whatever their frequency or severity, Dostoevsky's attacks could only have had the effect of making him highly and continuously receptive to a remolding of his previous beliefs and values.[127]

It was this reconfiguration of Dostoevskii's subconscious, as a result of the incredible intensity of his situation, that allowed him to take stock of his life, re-analyse it and come to the enlightened conclusion that is found in 'Мужик Марей'. It would also significantly alter the focus and scope of his future works from social romanticism into full, rich tragedy. By the time Dostoevskii left Siberia, his passion for life was unbridled.

Such was Dostoevskii's passion for moments of life-affirming intensity of reality, and such was his experience of moments of life-threatening duress, that he was able to bring to life with vivid, imaginative flair the news stories of the day in *Дневник писателя*. A particular favourite of his was the Kairova case, in which the eponymous defendant was on trial for attempting to kill her lover's wife in her bed. Dostoevskii sets the scene by taking the wife's point of view, and relates her feelings back to the condemned man:

> Она вынесла несколько минут (слишком много минут) *смертного страху*. Знаете ли, что такое *смертный страх*? Кто не был близко у смерти, тому трудно понять это. Она проснулась ночью, разбуженная бритвой своей убийцы, полоснувшей ее по горлу, увидала яростное лицо над собою […] она, уж конечно, была

[127] Frank, *The Years of Ordeal*, p. 119

> убеждена в эти первые, дикие, невозможные минуты, что уже зарезана и смерть неминуема, – да ведь это невыносимо, это горячешный кошмар, только наяву и, стало быть, во сто раз мучительнее; это почти всё равно, что смертный приговор привязанному у столба к расстрелянию и когда на привязанного уже надвинут мешок. . . (23:18)

It is a passage of non-fiction that could easily have a place in any of his great novels; and it is therefore cold, hard evidence of the power of Dostoevskii's 'fantastic realism'. Dostoevskii's reviews of news stories also enabled him to shed more light on the collective unconscious of the city, to feel its pulse and gauge a diagnosis on its ills. In addition, the reality of the news offered day-to-day stories that belonged to everyone, that were for everyone; there was no literary snobbery here. So by discussing the news, Dostoevskii could converse with the populace – and it frequently replied, judging by the vast amount of correspondence he received during the publication run of *Дневник писателя*. Catteau provides an eloquent summing-up of the news story's power for the author:

> For Dostoevsky, the news item, whether it was a crime of passion, a vast confidence trick or financial catastrophe, a scandalous verdict, a personal or collective attempt at arson, a suicide caused by despair or ideology, a train crash, children plotting against their father, or the numerous cases of ill-treated children, had its roots deep in changeable reality and its appalling or amazing oddity revealed the subterranean upheavals of society. It illuminated the hidden depths of the collective soul… The news item had a quality of universal prophetic experience, a power of persuasion that no other material in the novel possessed. Its great strength was that it belonged to the collective heritage of the writer, his heroes and his readers. It is the voice of the crowd returned to the crowd. The novelist was giving back to the reader something the reader had already assimilated more or less absentmindedly, but he added an interpretation, a new sense.[128]

Small wonder that Dostoevskii was an avid reader of newspapers and used many real-life stories as the basis for his characters and plot lines. Reality became fiction, but only because the names were changed, or the events altered to suit the author's ultimate purpose. This is one of the cornerstones of Dostoevskii's fantastic realism, which he outlines in a letter to Strakhov shortly after the completion of *Идиот*:

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[128] Catteau, pp. 186-87

> У меня свой особенный взгляд на действительность (в искусстве), и то, что большинство называет почти фантастическим и исключительным, то для меня иногда составляет самую сущность действительного. Обыденность явлений и казенный взгляд на них, по-моему, не есть еще реализм, а даже напротив. В каждом нумере газет Вы встречаете отчет о самых действительных фактах и о самых мудреных. Для писателей наших они фантастичны; да они и не занимаются ими; а между тем они действительность, потому что они *факты*. Кто же будет их замечать, их разъяснять и записывать? Они поминутны и ежедневны, а не *исключительны*. … Мы всю действительность пропустим этак мимо носу. Кто ж будет отмечать факты и углубляться в них? … Неужели фантастичный мой «Идиот» не есть действительность, да еще самая обыденная! Да именно теперь-то должны быть такие характеры в наших оторванных от земли слоях общества, – слоях, которые в действительности становятся фантастичными. (29/1:19)

Dostoevskii came under much criticism for his fantastic realism from devotees of more traditionally realistic contemporaries such as Turgenev and Tolstoi. But he was certain of his path in literature, no matter what critical barbs stung him. In a ruminative passage in his notebooks for *Подросток*, he writes: 'Подполье, подполье, *поэт подполья* – Фельетонисты повторяли это как нечто унизительное для меня. Дурачки. Это моя слава, ибо тут правда.' (16:330) Criticism was particularly sharp upon the publication of *Идиот*, a novel that contains many scenes and characters startlingly original for its time and, as his friend Appolon Nikolaevich Maikov made clear in a letter to the author, unfolds in an unusual atmosphere in which the characters seem to be animated by electricity. Dostoevskii replies:

> Совершенно другие я понятия имею о действительности и реализме, чем наши реалисты и критики. Мой идеализм – реальнее ихнего. Господи! Порассказать толково то, что мы все, русские, пережили в последние 10 лет в нашем духовном развитии, – да разве не закричат реалисты, что это фантазия! А между тем это исконный, настоящий реализм! Это-то и есть реализм, только глубже, а у них мелко плавает … Ихним реализмом – сотой доли реальных, действительно случившихся фактов не объяснишь. (28/2:329)

Perhaps Dostoevskii's ultimate expression of his realism is to be found in his last notebooks, where he ties together his philosophy on the fantasy of reality with the role he has assigned himself as a writer, would-be Christian prophet and, through the correspondence he gained as a result of his hugely successful *Дневник писателя*,

spokesman for the average Russian citizen. His aim, he writes in this now famous passage, is: 'При полном реализме найти в человеке человека.

> Это русская черта по преимуществу, и в этом смысле я конечно народен (ибо направление мое истекает из глубины христианского духа народного), – хотя и неизвестен русскому народу теперешнему, но буду известен будущему.
>
> Меня зовут психологом: неправда, я лишь реалист в высшем смысле, то есть изображаю все глубины души человеческой. (27:65)

Strakhov, writing after Dostoevskii's death, backs this up with a surprisingly similar statement: 'никто так далеко не заходил в изображении всяких падений души человеческой.'[129]

Despite exploring these depths, Dostoevskii was always very careful to make sure that even his most fantastic episodes were grounded in reality. This applies to his whole career: from the basis for fantasy in mental illness in *Двойник*, to a similar cause for the appearance of Ivan Karamazov's devil, there is always a realistic explanation – often grounded in the medical literature that Dostoevskii fervently read – despite the apparent fantasy of the passage. Even the notion of miracles in *Братья Карамазовы* is kept at a realistic distance, those referred to having taken place many years ago, many miles distant, or having a completely mundane alternative explanation – despite the writer's own faith accepting them as a given.

Dostoevskii's adherence to the grounding conventions of realism is emphasised in a letter to a budding novelist, who had sent him a story wherein an ascetic monk has a heart literally made of ice. He replies: 'Да и как может жить человек без физического органа? Пусть это фантастическая сказка, но ведь фантастическое в искусстве имеет предел и правила. Фантастическое должно до того соприкасаться с реальным, что Вы должны *почти* поверить ему.'

He then cites Pushkin's *Пиковая дама* as 'верх искусства фантастического.

> И вы верите, что Германн действительно имел видение, и именно сообразное с его мировоззрением, а между тем, в конце повести […] Вы не знаете, как решить: Вышло ли это видение из природы Германна, или действительно он один из тех, которые

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[129] Тюнькин (ed.), *Ф. М. Достоевский в воспоминаниях современников*, 1, p. 425

соприкоснулись с другим миром, злых и враждебных человечеству духов. (30/1:192)

Pushkin was of course the poet of Petersburg – 'in the same measure the creator of the *image* of Petersburg as Peter the Great was the builder of the city itself'[130] – the setting for his most famous works including *Пиковая дама* and *Медный всадник*. It is no wonder, then, that for Dostoevskii, a Pushkin devotee from his youth, was captivated by the city, and that a dreamlike image was already well-formed in his mind before he moved there. It is beyond doubt that Dostoevskii and his brother Mikhail, like any other young people entering the capital for the first time, were immediately struck by the city's grand European palaces, cathedrals and wide boulevards when they arrived in 1837. The sheer scale of the city must have made it seem almost unreal, a fairy tale, particularly to two impressionable youths accustomed to the more traditional Russian edifices of Moscow. However, this enchantment would soon turn to despair for the young Fedor, and his attitude to the city continued to fluctuate between these poles for the rest of his life.

The most extensive accounts of Dostoevskii's experiences of and opinions on St Petersburg's nature are to be found in his *Петербургская летопись* feuilletons of 1847. While these should not be strictly viewed as non-fiction – the writer assumes the role of an anonymous wandering *flâneur* and only signs one piece '*Ф. Д.*' – it is evident that a lot of Dostoevskii's own thoughts are poured into these extensive accounts; particularly because a love-hate relationship with the city is so apparent. The feuilleton of April 27 states:

Было сырое туманное утро. Петербург стал злой и сердитый, как раздраженная светская дева, пожелтевшая со злости на вчерашний бал. Он был сердит с ног до головы. Дурно ль он выспался, разлилась ли в нем в ночь желчь в несоразмерном количестве, простудился ль он и захватил себе насморк, проигрался ль он с вечера как мальчик в картишки до того, что пришлось на утро вставать с совершенно пустыми карманами, с досадой […] он сердился так, что грустно было смотреть на его сырые, огромные стены, на его мраморы, барельефы, статуи, колонны, которые как будто тоже сердились на дурную погоду […] на обнаженный мокрый гранит тротуаров […] на самых прохожих … Весь горизонт петербургский смотрел так кисло, так кисло… Петербург дулся. […]

[130] N. P. Antsiferov, quoted in Fanger, p. 104

> Видно было, что ему страх как хотелось сосредоточить, как это водится в таких случаях у иных гневливых господ, всю тоскливую досаду свою на каком-нибудь подвернувшемся постороннем третьем лице, поссориться, расплеваться с кем-нибудь окончательно, распечь кого-нибудь на чем свет стоит, а потом уже и самому куда-нибудь убежать с места и ни за что не стоять более в Ингерманландском суровом болоте. (18:15-16)

The impression of the city's 'character' is that of a reckless, perhaps somewhat naïve society youth. This idea is fleshed out further in the feuilleton of May 11:

> Я всегда воображал себе Петербург […] младшим, балованым сынком почтенного папеньки, человека старинного времени […] Папенька наконец отказался от дел, поселился в деревне и рад-рад, что может в своей глуши носить свой нанковый сюртук без нарушения приличия. Но сынок отдан в люди, сынок должен учиться всем наукам, сынок должен быть молодым европейцем, и папенька […] непременно хочет, чтобы сынок его был самый просвещенный молодой человек. Сынок немедленно схватывает верхи, пускается в жизнь, заводит европейский костюм, заводит усы, эспаньолку, и папенька, вовсе не замечая того, что у сынка в то же самое время заводится голова, заводится опытность, заводится самостоятельность […] в ужасе видя одну эспаньолку, видя, что сынок без счету загребает в родительском широком кармане, заметя наконец, что сынок немного раскольник и себе на уме, – ворчит, сердится, обвиняет и просвещенье и Запад […] Но сынку нужно жить, и он так заспешил, что над молодой прытью его невольно задумаешься. Конечно, он мотает довольно резво. (18:20-21)

One cannot help but wonder whether 'папенька' refers to that ancient symbol of traditional Russian values, Moscow.

What is most striking about these passages is the personification. It makes the city of St Petersburg seem alive, as if there is a heartbeat below its streets; and as if it may suddenly start moving of its own accord, 'поссориться', or run away from its 'Ингерманландское болото' – much as the famous symbol of St Petersburg, Falconet's statue of Peter I, comes to life in Pushkin's *Медный всадник*. This, naturally, introduces a pervading sense of unpredictability to the city, as if anything could happen at any time without warning; and as such is dreamlike in its potential for limitless possibility. Moreover, in its vivid personification in such passages and in Dostoevskii's fiction, the city itself becomes a character, whose subconscious the author raids for his many Petersburg tales.

Another aspect of dreamlike reality, again previously mentioned in referring to fiction, comes to light later on in this feuilleton: the fact that St Petersburg is a city of ambitious dreams, both realised and crushed. A sharp dividing line exists between the achievers, whose dreams have been realised, and the acknowledged failures, whose dreams have become nightmares. Yet, even the apparently perfect lives of the former are deemed to be inherently boring by the *flâneur*. Such perfection is dreamlike, it has no bearing with vivid reality:

> Уж известно, что зевота в Петербурге такая же болезнь, как грипп, как геморрой, как горячка […] Петербург встает зевая, зевая исполняет обязанности, зевая отходит ко сну. Но всего более зевает он в своих маскарадах и в опере. […] Уже всякий познал, что в Петербурге есть опера, и всякий завидует. А между тем Петербург все-таки немножко скучает, и под конец зимы опера ему становится также скучна, как… ну, как например последний зимний концерт. (18:21)

It may be presumptuous of the *flâneur* to make such a claim – he does not, after all, live such a life and may indeed be simply envious of it. But this empty boredom of the successful and bourgeois is further evident later on, when the apparent excitement of such a life is exposed as being depressingly fake:

> признаюсь, иногда как будто нападает тоска. Похоже на то, когда бы вы, например, шли в темный вечер домой, бездумно и уныло посматривая по сторонам, и вдруг слышите музыку. Бал, точно бал! В ярко освещенных окнах мелькают тени, слышится шелест и шарканье, как будто слышен соблазнительный бальный шопот […] вы проходите мимо, развлеченный, взволнованный; в вас пробудилось желание чего-то, стремленье. Вы все будто слышали, а между тем вы уносите с собой один бледный, бесцветный мотив ее, идею, тень, почти ничего. И проходишь, как будто не доверяя чему-то; слышится что-то другое, слышится, что сквозь бесцветный мотив обыденной жизни нашей звучит другой, пронзительно живучий и грустный […] Тоска и сомнение грызут и надрывают сердце (18:22).

Caught between the achievers and failures of St Petersburg, as indeed most of its citizens including Dostoevskii at the time were, the *flâneur* can see both extremities of the city's dream: the dreamlike society world of opera and balls, and the harshly real world of poverty outside the exclusive palace windows.

Yet this world of aspiring citizens between the achievers and the failures, who dream of working their way up the ladder of rank, are to Dostoevskii a population of

automatons who seem to grow increasingly isolated from reality. Their life becomes their work and they become slowly more introverted; a process Dostoevskii sees as inherently dangerous, as he remarks in a letter to Mikhail in early 1847:

> *Вне* должно быть уравновешено с *внутренним*. Иначе, с отсутствием внешних явлений, внутреннее возьмет слишком опасный верх. Нервы и фантазия займут очень много места в существе. Всякое внешнее явление с непривычки кажется колоссальным и пугает как-то. Начинаешь бояться жизни. […] Но боже, как много отвратительных подло-ограниченных седобородых мудрецов, знатоков, фарисеев жизни, гордящихся опытностию, то есть своею безличностью […] с неистощимо мелкою злостью осуждающих сильную, горячую душу не выносящего их пошлого, дневного расписания и календаря жизненного. Подлецы они с их водевильным земным счастием. Подлецы они! Встречаются иногда и бесят мучительно.' (28/1:137-138)

Dostoevskii saw the ultimate danger of such a mindless swarm in his sole visit to London, so much more crowded, polluted and both wealthy and deprived, that he could only look on aghast at this example of humanity's 'progress'. His experience is recalled in *Зимние заметки о летних впечатлениях* (1863), but this is 'no mere account of a visit to London,' writes de Jonge,

> it is a nightmare myth of the city itself, London town being no more than a catalyst to the imagination. The passage renders a view of the nineteenth-century city that is to inform his whole work, shaping the stereotypes which he will employ to describe his own capital. He responds to his vision as to a glimpse of the future. This London becomes the definitive city, the supreme manifestation of the spirit of the age, a prophetic emblem that pointed the way the rest of Europe was going.[131]

Perhaps as a result, Dostoevskii's relationship with St Petersburg seemed to sour increasingly as he grew older. In his *Дневник писателя* he writes at length about the 'negativity' of the city's cold-copied architecture and how it represents the 'dangerous' European ideas that took hold in Russia:

> Да и вообще архитектура всего Петербурга чрезвычайно характеристична и оригинальна и всегда поражала меня, – именно тем, что выражает всю его бесхарактерность и безличность за всё время существования. […] Что же касается до палаццов, то в них-то именно и отражается вся бесхарактерность идеи, вся отрицательность сущности петербургского периода, с самого начала

[131] de Jonge, p. 55

> его до конца. В этом смысле нет такого города, как он; в архитектурном смысле он отражение всех архитектур в мире, всех периодов и мод; всё постепенно заимствовано и всё по-своему перековеркано. В этих зданиях, как по книге, прочтете все наплывы всех идей и идеек, правильно или внезапно залетавших к нам из Европы и постепенно нас одолевавших и полонивших. (21:106-107)

Once again assuming the role of *flâneur*, Dostoevskii wanders the city and is depressed by what he sees, particularly the lives of the lowest classes. He finishes with a striking sentiment: 'Что, не приходило вам в голову, что в Петербурге угрюмые улицы? Мне кажется, это самый угрюмый город, какой только может быть на свете!' (21:111)

Yet an imaginative, dreamlike intensity still existed here for the writer, despite its threatening air. In the same entry in the *Дневник*, Dostoevskii describes a 'подлинно петербургское видение' that he was witness to as he tries to cross Nevskii Prospekt in 'адский туман':

> Слышны лишь топот и крики, а видно кругом лишь на сажень. И вот вдруг внезапно раздаются из тумана быстрые, частые, сильно приближающиеся твердые звуки, страшные и зловещие в эту минуту […] из тумана на расстоянии лишь одного шагу от вас вдруг вырезывается серая морда жарко дышащего рысака, бешено несущегося со скоростию железнодорожного курьерского поезда – пена на удилах, дуга на отлете, вожжи натянуты, а красивые сильные ноги с каждым взмахом быстро, ровно и твердо отмеривают по сажени. Один миг, отчаянный окрик кучера, и – всё мелькнуло и пролетело из тумана в туман, и топот, и рубка, и крики – всё исчезло опять, как видение. Подлинно петербургское видение! (21:105-106)

The enchantment of the city, therefore, still held sway late into his life. It is perhaps partially due to these dreamlike visions, this inherent imaginative power in St Petersburg, that Dostoevskii was to remain in the city, bar infrequent trips abroad and to his dacha, until his death.

Dostoevskii certainly drew on his own experiences to create the character of Ivan Petrovich in *Униженные и оскорбленные*. There is, for example, a definite parallel in the incredible success of the author's and character's first major published works, and in much of the subsequent critical sniping. Also, the character-narrator Ivan is another of Dostoevskii's long list of *мечтатели*, and so we can regard the

influences of creation as roughly the same – an insular sheltered life and Romantic imagination, for example.

But Dostoevskii's return to this typology of character is surprising. Considering the many harrowing experiences he encountered in Siberia in the decade of his exile, one would think he would have continued condemning the idle fancies of *мечтательность* as he did in *Дядюшкин сон* (1859) in the shape of Vasia, Zina's former love who admits that he has wasted his life on dreams. And certainly the intense horror of *Записки из мертвого дома* (1860) is far removed from the idle fantasies of the Petersburg *мечтатель*. In relation, *Униженные и оскорбленные* appears to be a rather indulgent, sentimental look back on the 1840s.

However, even here there are certain indications that Dostoevskii's world outlook has changed, indications betraying certain themes that would soon appear in Dostoevskii's greater works. The character of the Prince Valkovskii, notably, lays the foundations for the many sensualists of Dostoevskii's works. It is also in Valkovskii that the imagery of the spider is given flesh, as it previously was in the monstrous convict Gazin, and as it would again with Rogozhin, Stavrogin and, to a degree, Svidrigailov and Dmitrii Karamazov. And it is the very fact that Valkovskii succeeds in his schemes and goes unpunished that proves that the *мечтатель* is an impotent character type who cannot hope to make an impact in the world.

It is in Ivan Petrovich's experience of *мистический ужас* that we can draw a definite line of influence back to the author, to sensations he himself described in identical words. These feelings were usually associated with various other subconscious phenomena Dostoevskii experienced, yet it seems to be a sensation consistent enough throughout his life to be examined on its own. Most notably, these feelings involved an acute fear of death, much in the same way as Ivan explains his feelings of sudden, naked exposure to mortality.

This fear of death – manifest in Dostoevskii's unusual worries of falling into a 'lethargic' sleep and being buried alive that go back to his teenage years – seems to have become a basis for his fainting fits and nervous attacks of apoplexy ('кондрашки', as he himself dubbed them) of the 1840s: for example, his collapse in the street upon witnessing a funeral procession in 1845. In addition, his remarks to

Vsevolod Solov'ev in 1873, recalling his illness, vividly portray an almost physical presence of death: 'Рассказать я не могу этих отвратительных ощущений; но живо их помню; мне часто казалось, что я умираю, ну вот, право – настоящая смерть приходила и потом уходила.'[132]

This fear was to reach its culmination in Dostoevskii's presumed end before the firing squad on Semenovskii Square, where, he recalls, happy reflections on life soon gave way to existential terror: 'Предстоящая боль, предсмертные страдания не страшны: ужасен переход в другой, неизвестный образ.'[133]

Initially, it seems as if Dostoevskii's reprieve from death, by order of the tsar, is the moment when he is released from its stranglehold of fear. As the threat of immediate death is lifted, he began to appreciate life to a fuller extent, as we can appreciate from his last letter to his brother Mikhail before being sent into exile. It is this new lease on life – ironically bestowed upon a man being sent to a prison camp – that seems to cure Dostoevskii's *кондрашки*. Solov'ev recalls him saying:

> И странно – как только я был арестован – вдруг вся эта моя отвратительная болезнь прошла, ни в пути, ни на каторге в Сибири и никогда потом я ее не испытывал – я вдруг стал бодр, крепок, свеж, спокоен… Но во время каторги со мной случился первый припадок падучей, и с тех пор она меня не покидает.[134]

In addition, Dostoevskii's *мистический ужас* would reappear as an after-effect of epilepsy – an ailment which, it has been argued, is itself connected to his previous nervous illness. We can therefore regard Dostoevskii's mystic terror as a similar symptom of similar ailments, and consequently question whether he was ever actually free of its spectre.[135]

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[132] Тюнькин (ed.), *Ф. М. Достоевский в воспоминаниях современников*, 2, pp. 204-05
[133] Буданова и Фридлендер (eds.), *Летопись жизни и творчества Ф. М. Достоевского*, 3, p. 385
[134] Тюнькин (ed.), *Ф. М. Достоевский в воспоминаниях современников*, 2, p. 205
[135] As well as his real life experiences, Dostoevskii clearly drew on the influence of other writers for the more particularly striking episodes of *Униженные и оскорбленные*. The fantastical styles of Hoffmann and Gogol', combined with the 'urban Gothic' of Balzac and Eugène Sue are primary influences here. But the passage detailing Ivan Petrovich's *мистический ужас* bears strong hallmarks of the Gothic 'horror' of Edgar Allan Poe, a volume of stories by whom Dostoevskii once wrote an introduction to. Interestingly, he describes Poe in similar language to how he would describe himself at the end of his life, as a 'реалист в высшем смысле': 'если он и фантастичен, то, так сказать, внешним образом.' (19:88) While Dostoevskii still thinks of Hoffmann as superior – 'выше Поэ как поэт' (19:89) – the influence of the American is evident and clearly modified Dostoevskii's

Ultimately, many of Dostoevskii's early symptoms are transferred directly to Ivan Petrovich in *Униженные и оскорбленные*. His lingering illness, resulting in weakness, dizziness and the paralysing fear of bouts of mystic terror, lend a mysterious lustre that boosts the dreamlike intensity of the novel. It is ultimately a work of transition: between Dostoevskii's earlier and mature works; between Dostoevskii's two illnesses (Ivan's *кондрашки* and Nelli's epilepsy); and also between the writer's former and new outlooks on life – Dostoevskii's previous terror of mortality is shown in Ivan's recollections of his *мистический ужас*, but now, having experienced a reprieve from death and the purgatory of prison camp, he is willing to accept it, just as the terminally ill Ivan is, narrating from his hospital bed.

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application of style in heightened, dreamlike moments of intense, unreal reality. Part of this influence lies in the intense detail packed into passages, a trait of Poe's that Dostoevskii imitated: 'ярко видите все подробности...образа или события... тогда как событие это или почти совсем невозможно или еще никогда не случалось на свете.' (19:89)

3. HALLUCINATIONS

Hallucinations in Dostoevskii's works occur when a character 'sees' things in a waking state that others may not see, or things that simply cannot be seen, in reality. They are often startlingly real psychic projections that manifest themselves in a form that one or more of the senses can process.

> In careful present-day usage, hallucination indicates a false appearance, in sensory form, hence seemingly external, but occasioned by an internal condition of the mind, the central suggestion of the term being its subjectivity and groundlessness. Hallucinations can occur in any sensory modality, whether visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactile, or kinaesthetic, and they may sometimes be synesthetic – that is, input in one sensory modality is perceived in terms of another … Since all men are accustomed to believe their senses, it is the *sensory* form of its presentation that gives hallucination its psychic conviction.[136]

Hallucinations are therefore a 'deeper' subconscious phenomenon than dreamlike states, where it simply appears to the reader and/or character that he is experiencing a dream; although, similar to dreams, hallucinations can manifest themselves in dreamlike states as 'troughs' of deeper subconscious experience. More often than not, hallucinations are a symptom of illness, and may hint at latent schizophrenia. Lack of sleep and malnutrition are, again, also factors, as is sensory deprivation.[137]

Despite the similarity of hallucinations to dream episodes in Dostoevskii's texts, where they are often seamlessly embedded in the narrative, there are always definite clues that these are not dreams, but projections of the subconscious into reality. Moreover, Dostoevskii's fictional hallucinations are never benign; and while not directly threatening either, they assume grotesque or disturbing forms which bring into question the mental stability of the character, and often lead him or her to question their own sanity – for they are unwilling to accept that such forms can be

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[136] La Barre, 'Anthropological perspectives on hallucination and hallucinogens', in Siegel and West, *Hallucinations*, pp. 9-10

[137] Wallace D. Winters, 'The Continuum of CNS Excitatory States and Hallucinosis', in Siegel and West, *Hallucinations*, p. 53

part of themselves. Therefore, as the influential psychologist Carl Gustav Carus posited, such 'hallucinated phantoms' may be 'a projected fear of the self'[138].

One principal feature that demarcates hallucinations is their intense realism, which enables these episodes to be woven neatly into the text. These are not fantastical scenarios or epic visions; they take place in the settings of everyday reality, and it is this perceived proximity that makes them even more frightening. Many hallucinations in Dostoevskii's works are also strikingly vivid, to the extent that the character experiencing them feels like he can – and in Ivan Karamazov's case does – interact with the subconscious projection.

Raskol'nikov

A particularly interesting example is Raskol'nikov's hallucination of the police lieutenant Il'ia Petrovich ('поручик-порох') beating his landlady. Unusually, this is an aural hallucination as opposed to visual – yet Dostoevskii still manages to evoke vivid imagery of sight and touch in his description: 'Таких неестественных звуков, такого воя, вопля, скрежета, слез, побой и ругательств он никогда еще не слыхивал и не видывал. Он и вообразить не мог себе такого зверства, такого исступления […] драки, вопли и ругательства становились всё сильнее и сильнее.' (6:90)

Raskol'nikov 'saw' ('видывал') as well as heard these cries. The 'бой', 'зверство' and 'исступление' conjure a particularly vivid, brutal picture of physical pain; yet all this is produced by perceived sound. The power of this subconscious experience engages unrelated senses in what appears to be an act of synaesthesia. But in this passage Dostoevskii plays on the imagination as just a great deceiver as the hallucinating mind: it takes hallucinated noises and converts them into the scenes of horrid brutality that are still etched on Raskol'nikov's psyche from his murder. He immediately feels fear and panic at the lieutenant's presence, frightened that he has been found out. In addition, the assembled spectators he 'hears' in the stairwell

[138] See Rice, p. 137. Carus' original theory appears in *Vorlesungen über Psychologie gehalten im Winter 1829/30 zu Dresden* (1831)

foreshadow his nightmarish second dream in which the murder is replayed in front of a similar crowd.

However, the commotion then slowly fades 'до шепоту' (6:91) and Raskol'nikov lies on his sofa in confused torment for around half an hour, after which Nastas'ia – so often the emissary of 'true' reality during Raskol'nikov's many bouts of delirium – enters and debunks the whole episode: there was no shouting and no policeman. We know Nastas'ia is real and not a continuation of the hallucination because, as Richard Tempest has deduced, 'when she appears the perspective of the narrative momentarily shifts – Dostoevsky is "inside" her rather than "inside" Raskolnikov: this is indicated by a single word, "ascertaining" (*razgliadev*).'[139]

Again, it is important to prove as far as possible that this episode is not a dream (in spite of Tempest's subsequent, elaborate theory supporting that it is), particularly because, as we have seen with Ordynov, Dostoevskii can expertly utilise the confusion of the 'continuity hypothesis': his dreamers often 'wake up' to what is only the beginning of another dream. This may be the case in this example: Raskol'nikov 'лег на диван, натянул на себя шинель и тотчас же забылся … Он очнулся в полные сумерки от ужасного крику' (6:90), the cry of his landlady. Due to the confusing layers of dreamlike reality in *Преступление и наказание*, there is no reason to believe that Raskol'nikov here awakens to full consciousness. But in this case I would argue that he does – principally because Nastas'ia provides third party verification that nothing described happened; and also, according to the omniscient narrator, 'уже [Раскольников] не мог сомкнуть глаз' (6:91), right up until the moment Nastas'ia enters his room, implying a state of wakefulness for at least a good part of the episode.

So this is not a dream; instead, it is more than likely a hallucination wrought from Raskol'nikov's mental illness – itself caused by his refusal to acknowledge his guilt of murder and his fear of being found out. It is the latter fear that is given prominent form in this hallucination, for while Raskol'nikov is not the direct target of

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[139] Richard Tempest, *Russian Dreams – Pushkin, Chaadaev, Turgenev, Dostoevsky, Mandelshtam, Florensky*, Omega Books, London, 1987, p. 18. The passage of the text reads: 'Посмотрев на него внимательно и разглядев, что он не спит, она поставила свечку на стол […]' (6:91)

retribution for his crimes, the threat is present and frighteningly near. It is also frighteningly, physically brutal – perhaps because Raskol'nikov subconsciously expects no less repayment for his crime. It echoes the brutality of the murder itself, as well as its foreshadowing in Raskol'nikov's dream of the beaten mare. Another connection to this dream is formed in the narrator's description of the delirious Raskol'nikov before the hallucination – 'весь дрожа, как загнанная лошадь' (6:90) – which leads J. Thomas Shaw to suggest that the recipient of punishment in both that dream and this hallucination 'are both in some sense himself'[140]. The hallucination, then, assumes the form of a kind of psychic self-flagellation.

Nastas'ia herself offers a further interpretation of this hallucination, a kernel of folk wisdom which, though she is not aware of it, also relates to Raskol'nikov's guilt. 'Это кровь, – отвечала она наконец, тихо и как будто про себя говоря. […] – Никто не приходил. А это кровь в тебе кричит. Это когда ей выходу нет и уж печенками запекаться начнет, тут и начнет мерещиться…' (6:91)

While this appears to be little but a homespun attempt at a diagnosis of Raskol'nikov's illness, its wording does nothing to ease his fears. It immediately brings to mind the bloodstains on his clothing that he has hidden, and also the bloodstained flat he has left behind – both indelible marks in reality and on his psyche. It also seems to hint at the inevitability of Raskol'nikov's capture: the blood common to every man and woman 'cries out' when it is spilled; it is ultimately impossible to silence and will give him away. Raskol'nikov's indelible guilt is made apparent by his own 'кровь', which conjures the hallucination. Joseph Frank says that such a sequence of events 'was surely meant to provide further incentive for the narrator's eventual confession.'[141]

Stavrogin

Another striking example of a hallucination is that of the young suicide Matresha, which torments Stavrogin following his *сон* of the 'Golden Age'. Stavrogin denies

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[140] J. Thomas Shaw, 'Raskol'nikov's Dreams', *Slavic and East European Journal*, Vol. 17 (2), 1973, 131-45

[141] Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky – The Miraculous Years 1865-1871*, Princeton University Press, 1995, p. 84

this is a hallucination: ‘если б я когда-нибудь увидал ее наяву, хотя бы в галлюцинации!’ (11:22) he writes in his ‘confession’ to Bishop Tikhon. But Matresha is much more than just a figment of his fevered imagination, for she is a real character, she has a real past – and it is a horrifying past, entirely because of Stavrogin’s actions towards her. Her image of childish defiance – ‘с своим поднятым и грозящим мне кулачонком’ (11:22) – only emphasises this to him. She has now become an almost real presence in Stavrogin’s everyday life, for, he says, her image is one he cannot help evoking: ‘с тех пор представляется мне почти каждый день. Не само представлается, а я его сам вызываю и не могу не вызывать, хотя и не могу с этим жить.’ (11:22)

Stavrogin uses this hallucination to torment himself, to take revenge on himself for all of his crimes following his vision of perfect humanity in his preceding *сон*. He is a blemish on this vision, the ‘крошечная точка’ (11:22) appearing in the evening sunlight that Stavrogin equates to the small red spider and consequent recollections of Matresha’s suicide. Her appearance, like Raskol’nikov’s hallucination, can be viewed as a psychic method of self-flagellation, a tormenting neurosis that Stavrogin himself has created. This in itself speaks of Stavrogin’s mental instability and his susceptibility to hallucinations of this kind. His guilt has become manifest and will live with him, tormenting him, every day. The fact that he is a soulless, impassive atheist with no spiritual means with which to find forgiveness for his actions only compounds the impossibility of securing a release from this neurosis. ‘Stavrogin finds this lacerating reminder of his own evil unbearable,’ Frank writes, ‘but he wilfully refuses to suppress the recollection; and this unsupportable need to expiate his crime, which nothing he knows or believes in can help to absolve, is gradually driving him mad.’[142]

In fact, the appearance of Matresha is just one hallucination that Stavrogin has been experiencing up until his confession to Bishop Tikhon. The earlier magazine version of *Бесы*, which was cut by Dostoevskii from the final publication after the censor refused to publish the chapter ‘У Тихона’, involves Stavrogin telling how he is regularly visited by demons in various guises, and hints that they may even be

[142] Ibid., p. 490

starting to overwhelm him: '– Бесов было ужасно много вчера! – вскричал он хохоча, – ужасно много!' (12:141) Stavrogin is clearly displaying signs of mental illness here. Certain 'devils' even foreshadow the extended hallucination of Ivan Karamazov: one appears as an aged seminarian, while another attempts to psychologically analyse Stavrogin; while he himself admits, much as Ivan's devil will acknowledge: 'Я злился, что мой собственный бес мог явиться в такой дрянной маске.' (12:141) Even though he reassures Dar'ia Shatova that 'я в него не верю, успокойтесь […] Пока еще не верю' (12:141), Frank acknowledges that 'his self-absorption indicates that he is gradually beginning to believe in their reality.'[143]

This omitted material reveals that Stavrogin's mental instability is even more complex: his hallucinations assume different, and increasingly realistic, guises. These regular appearances of tormenting neuroses in the manifestation of evil or his evil deeds, and Stavrogin's seeming hopelessness of psychic release from them, indicate that madness and suicide are his only possible, logical fates.

Ippolit

In *Идиот*, hallucinations are given a supernatural edge that contributes to the fear they instil in Ippolit. His visions come to him in the form he dreads most: that of the over-riding power of nature over everything; or as Sidney Monas puts it, 'the ruthlessness, the imperviousness to human desire, the inflexibility to the point of seeming malice of the laws of nature'[144]. Ippolit recounts these hallucinations having taken place while at home in a state of fever and delirium, symptoms of his chronic consumption. They are influenced by his visit to see Holbein's painting of Christ's body taken down from the cross, a harshly realistic depiction exposing the frailty of the human body which suggests to Ippolit the presence of nature as a 'темная, наглая и бесмысленно-вечная сила, которой всё подчинено' (8:339). This power, made all the more vivid to Ippolit in his chronically ill state, then becomes embodied in a horrifying form as he lies thinking about it:

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[143] Ibid., p. 487
[144] Monas, 'Across the threshold', in Jones and Terry, p. 82

> Может ли мерещиться в образе то, что я вижу, в какой-то странной и невозможной форме, эту бесконечную силу, это глухое, темное и немое существо. Я помню, что кто-то будто бы повел меня за руку, со свечкой в руках, показал мне какого-то огромного и отвратительного тарантула и стал уверять меня, что это то самое темное, глухое и всесильное существо, и смеялся над моим негодованием. (8:340)

This is another manifestation of the existential *мистический ужас* that Ivan Petrovich experienced in *Униженные и оскорбленные*; but here, appearing to a dying teenager, it is even more vivid. The spider symbol manifests itself on the subconscious plane, signifying the primitive, inherent, all-conquering power of nature over man: man's mortality.

All the while, Ippolit affirms he is lying down and 'я совершенно не спал и лежал с открытыми глазами' (8:340); yet he 'sees' ('вижу') this abstract power, he 'remembers' ('помню') someone showing him it. These visions are therefore not a dream, but the powerful effect of the imagery is undeniable. This is only heightened when, during the vision, 'вдруг дверь моей комнаты отворилась, и вошел Рогожин.' (8:340)

Rogozhin's appearance at this point ties him directly to the mysterious 'сила' that Ippolit has just seen. He seems to be an extension of this force, just as he is an extension of the hallucination. Rogozhin is the earthly embodiment of the dark, sensual power of godless nature, and is perhaps all the more terrifying for it – for instead of merely residing in characters' subconscious like the 'огромный и отвратительный тарантул', he walks in their very midst. He is 'the incarnation of the all-powerful spirit of death'[145] who attempts to murder Prince Myshkin before killing Nastas'ia Filippovna. Fittingly, it is in Rogozhin's Petersburg house that hangs the copy of Holbein's painting which so horrifies both Ippolit and Myshkin.

There is absolutely no doubt that this appearance of Rogozhin is a hallucination, for Ippolit later proves that it could not have been possible for Rogozhin to gain access to his room and leave again that night. It must be added here that the character of Rogozhin never seems fully embodied in the text of *Идиот* and is generally

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[145] Leonard J. Kent, *The Subconscious in Gogol' and Dostoevskij, and its Antecedents*, Mouton, The Hague, 1969, p. 170

sketchily portrayed, like his appearance before Ippolit. That hallucinatory occurrence is undoubtedly a true example of imagery of the subconscious; but Elizabeth Dalton argues that Rogozhin's appearance in the text, particularly after Part One, can be taken as some sort of psychic projection:

> As an imaginative creation, Rogozhin is quite different from the other characters in the novel; he seems to stand on another plane of reality. The others are more or less in the realistic tradition of character, given a kind of three-dimensional solidity by their involvement in the dramatic action and by description of the details of their appearance, speech, and manner. … Rogozhin is not fully fleshed out with this sort of idiosyncratic detail that makes for the illusion of reality. … After the end of the first part, Rogozhin becomes strikingly unreal. He appears most often simply as a pair of 'strange glowing eyes', or as an indistinct figure half-glimpsed in darkness and often not even identified as Rogozhin, or named only later. … Rogozhin himself is a kind of hallucinatory figure, an internal force projected outward and perceived in consciousness as a physical image. But always he retains the fantastic power and mobility and the eerie flatness of a figure in a dream; like the dream-figure, he is an element of the mind itself.[146]

This lends further credence to Rogozhin being the human embodiment of the 'темная, наглая и бесмысленно-вечная сила, которой всё подчинено'. Dalton adds: 'In the apparition of Rogozhin this "nature" is embodied in the form of human passion, the brutal lust that will eventually lead Rogozhin to murder.'[147] The shadowy figure of Rogozhin stalks the events of *Идиот* and its characters like death itself.

It is no surprise, then, that Ippolit's hallucinations have a very powerful influence on him. These manifestations of brute nature utterly compound his atheism, and therefore his lack of hope in life. Consequently, they convince him to end his own life in an act of defiance, by overcoming nature in an act of his own will. He says: 'Вот этот особенный случай, который я так подробно описал, и был причиной, что я совершенно «решился». … Нельзя оставаться в жизни, которая принимает такие странные, обижающие меня формы.' (8:341) The hallucination has tapped Ippolit's darkest fear – the mortality that overshadows his diseased life – and inspired him to take action to defeat it in the only manner possible. Even though

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[146] Dalton, pp. 83-84
[147] Ibid., p. 149

Ippolit is denied this when he botches his suicide, his very intention proves that these hallucinations have the most profound visible effect on a character of any in Dostoevskii's works.

Ivan Karamazov

However, for its pure, intense detail, length, and interaction, the most striking example of a hallucination in Dostoevskii's works is Ivan Karamazov's devil. There are indeed close parallels between Ippolit and Ivan, not least in their philosophical outlooks on life. Ippolit's 'Необходимое объяснение' before his attempted suicide is a forerunner of Ivan's 'Бунт' in *Братья Карамазовы*; both characters would rather 'return their entrance ticket' – 'билет на вход спешу возвратить обратно' (14:223), as Ivan says – rather than endure the injustices of life. Yet both harbour an affection for nature – Ivan's 'клейкие распускающиеся весной листочки' (14:210), and Ippolit admitting he is happy to spend his last days in Pavlovsk, 'все-таки хоть на дерево в листьях посмотришь' (8:239) – and both display acts of philanthropy, Ivan towards the drunkard he helps in a blizzard, Ippolit towards the poor, young doctor whom he helps get a new position. But ultimately, the promise of an afterlife offers no comfort for either character. Sarah Hudspith says that Ivan, like Ippolit, is 'also a fragmented character, riven by his inability to recognize the spiritual aspect of man's nature. As a result he too is visited by strange, supernatural apparitions…'[148] These apparitions themselves have forebears in Stavrogin's devils, and are also seen as hallucination or dream in *Братья Карамазовы* by Father Ferapont, Liza and, to the latter's great surprise, Alesha. But the mental effects of Ivan's visitation are far more debilitating than those experienced by any other character.

Although in the text this episode is defined as Ivan's 'кошмар', Dostoevskii provides important signs that this is not a dream. Most obviously, Ivan has a lengthy conversation with a 'черт' too detailed to feature in any dream; and this devil employs bluffs and double bluffs to try to get Ivan to believe in him. In fact, it is

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[148] Sarah Hudspith, *Dostoevsky and the Idea of Russianness – A new perspective on unity and brotherhood*, RoutledgeCurzon, London and New York, 2004, p. 122

such a detailed hallucination that it flirts with the realm of the supernatural. In a notebook sketch, Dostoevskii even considers having Ivan physically interact with the devil by striking him: 'Иван бьет его, а тот очутывается на разных стульях.' (15:321) The devil disappears and reappears on different chairs in Ivan's room, with objective reality – the sense of touch – being juxtaposed by extreme fantasy. But the latter pole is too extreme for Dostoevskii's poised fantastic realism, and he settled for the no-less-intense, yet more uncertain, subconscious imagery of the hallucination. In doing so, the reader better infers that, to all intents and purposes, this devil is a product of Ivan's increasingly unstable psyche, a tormented mind on the verge of schizophrenia. As the doctor from Moscow tells him: 'Галлюцинации в вашем состоянии очень возможны' (15:70). And, as Ivan himself tells his younger brother: 'У меня, Алеша, теперь бывают сны… но они не сны, а наяву: я хожу, говорю и вижу… а сплю.' (15:86) Such waking dreams are, like Raskol'nikov's and Ippolit's above, better described as hallucinations.

Ivan has in fact been 'visited' by a 'devil' ever since Smerdiakov gave him cause to believe that he is responsible for his father's murder. It is the consequent questions of doubt in his rationalistic beliefs which form in his mind that coalesce into the psychic projection.

> Ivan's dialogue with the devil plays on the continual fluctuation between the stirrings of his conscience and the amorally nihilistic conclusions that he has drawn from his refusal to accept God and immortality. … Dostoevsky's devil, however, does not preach moral sermons but ridicules the inconsistency between Ivan's pangs of conscience and the ideas he has accepted and expounded. 'Everything is permitted' for those who do not believe in God and immortality, and Ivan has rejected both. Why, then, should he be tormented by feelings of moral guilt that derive from such principles? The devil arrives to personify Ivan's self-mockery of his own moral-psychic contradictions…[149]

Ivan's hallucination, then, is principally the dramatisation of his tormenting struggle with his own beliefs. In the first instance, the existence of such a devil disproves Ivan's atheism. Yet this devil proceeds to denigrate his own position by appearing as a decidedly real, ordinary character, approaching his fifties, warty, and susceptible to

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[149] Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky – The Mantle of the Prophet 1871-1881*, Princeton University Press, 2002, p. 678

catching colds – 'джентльмен принадлежит к разряду бывших белоручек-помещиков […] но мало-помалу с обеднением' (15:70-71) – much like Stavrogin's prosaic devil in the omitted section of *Бесы*. 'All these anchor Satan firmly in the quotidian reality of ordinary existence,' writes Frank, 'while he remains a supernatural Satan at the same time.'[150] Yet, as Victor Terras has noted, he is better described physically than any other character in the novel.[151] This paradox is yet another fine example of Dostoevskii's fantastic realism, and it is this everyday appearance of this supposed 'devil' that challenges Ivan from the outset. Ivan himself is caught in a paradox by Dostoevskii's ingenious use of a hallucinatory devil: he perversely desires the devil's true existence to prove that he is not going insane; but also wishes the devil did not exist, and is purely a psychic projection, in line with his atheism. But the devil's ordinary, scruffy appearance is a psychological blow to Ivan's latter hope. F. F. Seeley even equates his appearance with that of Ivan's father in his youth – 'the guise of a parasite' – and, consequently, 'symbolically Ivan identifies his devil with his father, and rams the point home by insisting … that this devil embodies only the basest and stupidest, the most vile and vulgar elements of his self.'[152] The devil himself asks Ivan, mockingly: 'как, дескать, к такому великому человеку мог войти такой пошлый черт?' (15:81)

It is but one attempt by Ivan's psyche, through this devil, to renounce his rationalistic theories and atheistic stance in life. In addition, the devil desires independence and himself questions the existence of God and Satan in order to trick Ivan into belief; he outlines his connection to physical reality by misquoting Terence – 'Сатана sum et nihil humanum me alienum puto' (15:74)[153] – implying that evil lies in physical, earthly things; and he pokes fun at science – 'теперешняя земля, может, сама-то биллион раз повторялась' (15:79) – in an attempt to show how it reduces life to pointlessness.

As Ivan slides further into insanity, his ideas and philosophies begin to be dredged up by the *черт*, sarcastically mocked, and thrown back at Ivan as evidence that he

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[150] Ibid., p. 554
[151] Victor Terras, *A Karamazov Companion – Commentary on the Genesis, Language, and Style of Dostoevsky's Novel*, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1981, p. 385 n.290
[152] F. F. Seeley, 'Ivan Karamazov', in Jones and Terry, p. 126
[153] 'I am Satan [instead of 'I am a man'], nothing human is alien to me.'

indeed does harbour spiritual faith. Among these is the story of the philosopher condemned to walk a quadrillion miles in the afterlife, which hides Ivan's longing for faith when he was an impressionable 17-year-old. By hinting at Ivan's latent faith through his 'devil', Dostoevskii implies the bankruptcy of Ivan's theses, including that of the Grand Inquisitor, thus presenting a 'metaphysical condemnation of his ideas.'[154] Moreover, Ivan starts to find his very own ideas naive and distasteful as they are presented to him. The devil becomes

> a *reductio ad absurdum* of Ivan's earlier intellectual positions, of his proud rational rebellion against divine order, and of his greatest creation, that ultimate embodiment of rational humanism, the Grand Inquisitor. In the course of his nightmare Ivan is compelled to recognise all this ... But what strikes Ivan as different here is not the content of the Devil's ideas, but their distasteful form[155].

As if to highlight the depth of Ivan's own illness, his psychic projection has serious issues with its own existence. It is after all, not a satanic figure, but instead a chaotic composite of Ivan's rationalism, his 'карамазовщина', and his doubts over both. The devil is therefore depicted as suffering some sort of identity crisis: 'Я страдаю, а всё же не живу. Я икс в неопределенном уравнении. Я какой-то призрак жизни, который потерял все концы и начала, и даже сам позабыл наконец, как и назвать себя.' (15:77)

Ivan tries to remain resolute throughout. He acknowledges his fragile mental state, and, though drawn into a conversation with his hallucination, always rebukes it: 'всегда угадываю то, что ты мелешь, потому что *это я, я сам говорю, а не ты!* […] Ты моя галлюцинация. Ты воплощение меня самого, только одной, впрочем, моей стороны… моих мыслей и чувств, только самых гадких и глупых.' (15:72) The narrator later confirms: 'Он сопротивлялся изо всех сил, чтобы не поверить своему бреду и не впасть в безумие окончательно.' (15:75)

But the longer the hallucination continues, the more Ivan starts to lose control: 'ты не сам по себе, ты – *я*, ты есть *я* и более ничего! Ты дрянь, ты моя фантазия!' (15:77), he screams. The devil then teases Ivan by telling him his own dreams, to

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[154] Terras, *A Karamazov Companion*, p. 52
[155] W. J. Leatherbarrow, *Fyodor Dostoyevsky:* The Brothers Karamazov, Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 56

make Ivan deny his existence even more, and then relates Ivan's ultimate theory of 'антропофагия' by recounting another early thesis of Ivan's, 'Геологический-то переворот'. In this story, man rejects God and founds a purely rational society. But, knowing the length of time it would take to wean man off faith (and perhaps never), an 'elite' group forms to move things forward for the masses and are granted moral immunity to further the cause. 'Idealistic dreams of a transformed humanity can lead not only to swindling but also, as Ivan has now become aware, to a justification of murder.'[156] 'Явится человеко-бог' (15:83), the devil says, leading to the conclusion Ivan drew earlier in the novel that, without God, 'всё дозволено'. The devil echoes these exact words and, in the notebooks for this passage, preys on Ivan's guilt over his father's murder by adding: 'Для тебя геологический переворот совершился.' (15:334)[157] Maria Kravchenko, summarising the devil's tactics (and using the term 'unconscious' in an analogous manner to 'subconscious' for the purpose of this thesis), concludes:

> All this reveals Dostoevsky's ability to evaluate the significance of the unconscious, of the fortuitous and capricious tricks it can play by mixing up present impressions with those long buried in the depths of the unconscious, and projecting the resultant images to the surface in the form of a hallucination.[158]

Ivan, exasperated, finally throws a glass at the hallucination, echoing Martin Luther's famous throwing of his inkstand at Satan to be rid of him. But for Ivan, this action marks the devil's victory. The *черт* cries: 'вспомнил Лютерову чернильницу! Сам же меня считает за сон и кидается стаканами в сон! […] А ведь я так и подозревал, что ты делал только вид, что заткнул свои уши, а ты слушал…' (15:84) The hallucination has succeeded in forging an element of belief in his existence in Ivan's disturbed mind, despite the latter's resistance. The symbolic throwing of the glass at what is, essentially, a psychic projection, confirms this shred

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[156] Frank, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, p. 681

[157] Yet the devil also admits that Russian man is problematic in this aim, because they would always require 'санкция истины […] Но уж таков наш русский современный человечек: без санкции и смошенничать не решится, до того уж истину возлюбил…' (15:84) This is another of Ivan's opinions unearthed, and one that is shared with the author; i.e. Dostoevskii's view that Russians are God-bearing people, and would only accept the man-god if he were within God. This desire for 'истина' also echoes the Ridiculous Man's belief in 'Truth' as a constant across planes of reality.

[158] Maria Kravchenko, *Dostoevsky and the Psychologists*, Verlag Adolf M. Hakkert, Amsterdam, 1978, pp. 74-75

of belief. As a result, it also shows that Ivan is not truly an atheist. In addition, 'Ivan can no longer refuse to understand what he has been telling himself through the devil – that reason cannot eradicate the torments of his moral conscience.'[159]

More significantly, he is rapidly plummeting into mental illness. But before the devil can consolidate his victory, Ivan is reprieved by the arrival of Alesha – who, typical of his character, eases Ivan's mind, on this occasion by dispelling the hallucination of the devil with his appearance. But Ivan has been racked by his ordeal with his subconscious: he is being visibly torn apart by his indecision (over his theories, with spirituality challenging rationalism), guilt (over his own perceived role in his father's murder) and pride (his intellectualism). His anxieties have taken almost solid form in a devil who turns on its creator to torment him further: '*он* – это я, я сам' he says, half to Alesha, half to himself. 'Всё мое низкое, всё мое подлое и презренное!' Yet he acknowledges: 'Он мне, впрочем, сказал про меня много правды.' (15:87) In a way, then, the hallucination of the devil is almost a curative, subconscious attempt to stir up faith and moral conscience. 'Ivan's perspective is rearranged by the vision', writes E. C. Barksdale. 'His experience with the metaconscious has been disorienting, but it has pointed toward a new way of thinking and a new way of accepting the transcendent in a universe which the conscious mind recognizes as a cosmos where evil all too easily dwells.'[160]

Perhaps Ivan may have to get worse before ultimately getting better. This is certainly the view of Robin Miller, when she discusses the tale of the quadrillion-mile walk:

> this parable works to reawaken Ivan's faith, yet he also remembers that the story was his own and could not have been invented by the devil. The devil's plagiarism thus supports Ivan's notion of him as a hallucination. The irony thus intensifies, for we see Ivan caught in the mysterious act of unconsciously plagiarising himself; he draws upon something within himself that had remained hidden but had surfaced … at the needed time. … whether he [the devil] is real or hallucinatory, he seems to be working to reawaken Ivan's faith.[161]

The hallucination also offers another release for Ivan, according to Tatiana Kasatkina. At this stage of his internalised doubt, the devil becomes the

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[159] Frank, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, p. 682
[160] Barksdale, pp. 146-47
[161] Miller, *Worlds of the Novel*, p. 123

personification of self-criticism: 'Иван ... судит всех с позиций строжайшей нравственности, не скупится на осуждение, исключая только одного человека – себя. Для Ивана все – хуже него. Он настолько болезненно оберегает свою последнюю ценность (собственное «я»), что для того, чтобы осудить в себе что-то, ему необходимо это что-то обьективировать, персонифицировать.'[162]

This 'objectivised' self-criticism does provide Ivan with some new insights, which he goes on to convey at the trial of Dmitrii for their father's murder – not least that, instead of 'всё дозволено', now 'все за всех виноваты':

> if Ivan is guilty of his father's death, all other men are equally guilty, for people are not bound through their sense of love but, surprisingly enough, through their sense of hate. … Since all men are guilty, all are responsible for the sins of their brothers. Since all sin, all can forgive others.
>
> Another and more poignant insight leads from the moral point: if all men hate, there still exists the potential for love. Since all men sin, there exist heights from which they fall. Life is always potentially good.[163]

So there are, then, positives to be taken from Ivan's experience – though these are not apparent as he is led away from the courtroom following his crazed testimony and apparent acceptance that it was in fact he who killed his father. Despite their potential for spiritual salvation, Ivan's psychological insights gained through his personal experience of his subconscious have come at a steep price to his mental health.

Frank sees Ivan's hallucinatory episode as the summation of Dostoevskii's employment of fantastic realism:

> Dostoevsky's stroke of genius was to provide this thematic *topos* with a religious-philosophical dimension by transforming Ivan's doubts about the reality of the devil into the question of whether or not he believes in the existence of a supernatural realm, and hence of God. …Thus the oscillation of 'the fantastic' here receives perhaps its greatest literary expression as Dostoevsky turns its ambiguities into a probing of the question of religious faith.[164]

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[162] Т. А. Касаткина, *Характерология Достоевского – Типология эмоционально-ценностных ориентаций*, Наследие, Москва, 1996, p. 64
[163] Barksdale, pp. 146-47
[164] Frank, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, pp. 554-55

What is key in these moments, according to Miller, is 'the reader's hesitation about how to categorize certain events.

> … do they fit within the confines of everyday reality as we usually conceive it, or are they moments of fantasy, of the marvellous? Dostoevsky, like other practitioners of the fantastic, counts precisely upon this hesitation; to produce it successfully in a reader is to achieve a state of 'fantastic realism' – to recast, albeit only momentarily, one's sense of the nature of reality.[165]

These confusing devices speak of the success of Dostoevskii's realism, leading the reader alternately between belief and disbelief, reality and fantasy. Even the episode of Ivan Karamazov and the devil cannot be absolutely clearly defined as a hallucination. Physical evidence, in fact, suggests the whole episode may well have been a dream: the towel Ivan uses as a cold compress at the beginning of his conversation with the 'devil' is where he previously left it, and no glass has been smashed. Perhaps Ivan's impending schizophrenia created 'secondary' hallucinations of the towel and glass during his 'primary' hallucination of the devil: a hallucination within a hallucination as it were; perhaps Ivan only *imagined* he used the towel and threw the glass.

What is clear is that Ivan Karamazov's 'кошмар' is not a dream in the sense that he is experiencing subconscious images while asleep – the conversation of the whole episode is just too detailed. Instead, Ivan is very much awake, battling his inner demons – in his case literally, in the form of a hallucination. So it is a 'кошмар' in a figurative sense, as his worst fears arise to haunt him.

But it is apparent that, overall, such hallucinations do operate in a similar way to dreams, in that they reveal selected contents of the subject's psyche. These revelations are, almost exclusively, overriding preoccupations of the character, be they obsessions or deepest fears. But unlike the often densely symbolic or haphazard pattern of dreams, these contents manifest themselves in an orderly fashion in reality, boosting the frighteningly lifelike nature of the scenario. Ultimately, these hallucinations offer powerful insights into the crucial anxieties of those fictional characters who experience them. Hudspith writes:

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[165] Miller, *Worlds of the Novel*, p. 110

> Dostoevsky is indicating … that the semblance of health and stability offered by an emphasis on all that is not spiritual, that is, the intellect and the flesh, is in fact the beginning of a sickness in which visions of other worlds are dismembered from the whole and become tormenting instead of joyful.[166]

The common root of the anxieties of Raskol'nikov, Ippolit, Stavrogin and Ivan Karamazov is the absence of spirituality from their personal philosophies. Consequently, as Konstantin Mochul'skii posits: 'Реальность ускользает от человека, потерявшего высшую реальность – Бога'[167].

Dostoevskii

There is good reason to believe that Dostoevskii was subject to hallucinations at least in the early part of his life, despite a relative scarcity of documentary evidence. His earliest account of a waking subconscious experience can in fact be regarded as a hallucination, and is recorded at the beginning of his story 'Мужик Марей' in the *Дневник писателя* of February 1876. He recalls that, as a boy, he was exploring the forest around Darovoe when he heard a shouted warning that a wolf was on the loose: 'Мне крик: «Волк бежит» – померещился. Крик был, впрочем, такой ясный и отчетливый, но такие крики (не об одних волках) мне уже раз или два и прежде мерещились, и я знал про то. (Потом, с детством, эти галлюсинации прошли.)' (22:48)

This, therefore, would not appear to be an isolated occasion. It is difficult, however, to draw a dividing line here between an actual aural hallucination and the fertile imagination of a ten-year-old boy. What lies in favour of the former is the young Dostoevskii's reaction to the cry: he is seized by panic and flees the wood. Upon seeing one of his father's serfs, known only as Marei, working the field, he runs to him for protection.

While we cannot say it provides a direct inspiration for Raskol'nikov's aural hallucination of the beaten landlady, we can draw a parallel to its combination of psychic, sensory perception with fevered imagination – in this case, that of a ten-

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[166] Hudspith, p. 124
[167] Мочульский, p. 512

year-old boy brought up on literature. Though the cries are imaginary, the fear of being caught – by the wolf (in Dostoevskii's case) and by the authorities (in Raskol'nikov's) – is very real.

This episode is also integral to arguably one of the turning points in Dostoevskii's life. For it is in remembering the old Marei's kind, comforting words to him as a scared boy that the writer as a Siberian convict came to a deeper understanding of the fundamentally loving, Christian spirit of the Russian people – an outlook that would regenerate his ideals and beliefs and remain with him for the rest of his life. Therefore, we can posit that subconscious phenomena are at least perceived by Dostoevskii as an integral part of life's turning points.

It would seem Dostoevskii's hallucinations became more prevalent in the 1840s, and were symptoms of the 'nervous illness' that many have regarded as a forerunning ailment to his epilepsy. Aleksandr Egorovich Riesenkampf, a doctor who once shared lodgings with Dostoevskii in the early 1840s, writes: 'Неоднократно он мне жаловался, что ночью ему все кажется, будто бы кто-то около него храпит; вследствие этого делается с ним бессонница и какое-то беспокойство, так что он места себе нигде не находит'.[168]

In the late 1840s, Dostoevskii consulted the doctor Stepan Dmitrievich Ianovskii when his illness appeared to be growing worse and his hallucinations more frequent. The doctor, who soon became a good friend of the author, acknowledges the symptoms – 'Мне кажется, беловат, нервный; спать-то спал; ну а вот галлюцинации-то, батенька, были, и голову мутило' – and offers a simple diagnosis: 'галлюцинации – от нервов'[169]. Unfortunately, details of these hallucinations have not been recorded. However, it must be noted that this nervous illness is also associated with Dostoevskii's anxiety dreams, particularly with his deteriorating condition while captive inside the Peter and Paul fortress in 1849. A letter to his brother Mikhail on August 27 describes how the floor of his cell occasionally begins to sway as if he is in a ship's cabin, indicating at least a degree of hallucinatory derangement: 'особенно к ночи, усиливается впечатлительность,

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[168] Тюнькин (ed.), *Ф. М. Достоевский в воспоминаниях современников*, 1, p. 183
[169] Ibid., p. 232

по ночам длинные, безобразные сны, и сверх того, с недавнего времени, мне всё кажется, что подо мной колышется пол, и я в моей комнате сижу, словно в пароходной каюте. Из всего этого я заключаю, что нервы мои расстроиваются.' (28/1:159)

Dostoevskii experienced another hallucination in Dresden's Russian consulate on June 16, 1867, according to Anna Grigor'evna: 'Он мне сказал, что когда мы сидели в канцелярии, то ему вдруг привиделся брат Миша, – вдруг из-за двери показалась голова и плечи его, что, может быть, он начинает сходить с ума'[170]. Anna virtually glosses over this almost ghostly vision, as if she is used to her husband witnessing such things; and the simple facts that he had experienced an epileptic fit two days previously, and that he had had an argument with a consulate official in that very office, suggests that this hallucination was certainly 'от нервов', as Ianovskii concluded. Also, if we take into account the strong bond Dostoevskii shared with his brother and the devastating loss he felt upon his death, this hallucination may have been a projected form of wish fulfilment, of a desire to have his brother near while he remained in self-imposed exile in Europe.

Overall it seems that Dostoevskii's detailed fictional accounts of hallucinations are rooted more in a deep interest in the subject than in personal experience. Indeed, Ianovskii remarks how the writer often borrowed his books on the physiology of the brain and head to fuel this interest:

> Федор Михайлович часто брал у меня книги медицинские, особенно те, в которых трактовалось о болезнях мозга и нервной системы, о болезнях душевных и о разбитии черепа по старой, но в то время бывшей в ходу системе Галла. Эта последняя книга с рисунками занимала его до того, что он часто приходил ко мне вечером потолковать об анатомии черепа и мозга, о физиологических отправлениях мозга и нервов, о значении черепных возвышенностей … Прикладывая каждое мое объяснение непременно к формам своей головы и требуя от меня понятных для него разъяснений каждого возвышения и углубления в его черепе, он часто затягивал беседу далеко за полночь.[171]

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[170] А. Г. Достоевская, *Дневник 1867 года*, Москва, «Наука», 1993, pp. 105-06
[171] Тюнькин (ed.), *Ф. М. Достоевский в воспоминаниях современников*, 1, p. 239

It was a combination of this thirst for knowledge, an acquaintance with medical texts such as Carus' pre-psychoanalytical *Psyche* (1846), and frequent consultation with doctors that allowed Dostoevskii to develop realistic hallucinatory passages such as Ivan's 'conversation' with a devil. On sending his proofs of this chapter of *Братья Карамазовы* to the editor of *Русский вестник*, Nikolai Alekseevich Liubimov, Dostoevskii writes that he has run its details past more than one medical authority: 'я давно уже справлялся с мнением докторов (и не одного). Они утверждают, что не только подобные кошмары, но и галлюсинации перед «белой горячкой» возможны. Мой герой, конечно, видит и галлюсинации, но смешивает их с своими кошмарами.' (30/1:205)

This is testament to Dostoevskii's firm intention to base this episode in clinical fact, and at least one doctor acknowledged Dostoevskii's realism after the chapter's publication. Dr Aleksandr Fedorovich Blagonravov wrote to Dostoevskii: 'Описать форму душевной болезни, известную в науке под именем галлюцинаций, так натурально и вместе так художественно, навряд ли бы сумели наши корифеи психиатрии.' (30/1:390) Dostoevskii replied on December 19, 1880:

> Вас, особенно как врача, благодарю за сообщение Ваше о верности изображенной мною психической болезни этого человека. Мнение эксперта меня поддержит, и согласитесь, что этот человек (Ив. Карамазов) при данных обстоятельствах никакой иной галлюсинации не мог видеть, кроме этой. Я эту главу хочу впоследствии, в будущем «Дневнике», разъяснить сам критически. (30/1:236-237)

Sadly, Dostoevskii died before he could submit such an analysis.

Modern medical research has given us another possible explanation for Ivan's hallucination:

> In cataplexy, an awake, alert person suddenly loses all muscle tone and falls to the floor. These attacks are frequently reported to be triggered by excitement or laughing. …While in an atonic condition, the person may see imaginary creatures or hear imaginary voices. These hallucinations are called hypnogogic hallucinations. People who fall into a state of cataplexy with hypnogogic hallucinations give every appearance of having fallen into REM sleep while remaining conscious.[172]

[172] Kolb and Whishaw, p. 476

Ivan may have suffered such an attack and, already sitting, did not fall over. The rest of the episode may indeed have been a waking form of REM dream imagery from Ivan's point of view, which also included his own, imagined interjections. In addition, when Ivan hears Alesha tapping at his window he tries to get up but feels bound in his chair, as if still in an atonic state. Again, the problem with proving that Ivan was in such a state is the sheer length and detail of his encounter with the devil. However, cataplexy is at the very least a possible means of explaining not only Ivan's hallucination, but Raskol'nikov's and Ippolit's too: for the former is sitting and the latter two lying down when they experience their hallucinations. By extension, Dostoevskii may have even been prone to such attacks, and this may be a possible explanation for the fits and collapses he suffered due to his 'nervous illness' in the 1840s.

Another source of inspiration for Dostoevskii's hallucinatory passages is to be found in Anna Grigor'evna's marginalia to the author's *Полное собрание сочинений* of 1906. In a note to the death scene of Katerina Marmeladova in *Преступление и наказание*, Anna comments on the possible influence of Dostoevskii's first wife, Mariia Dmitrievna, whose chronic consumption led to delusory behaviour during the final two years of her life. Anna writes:

> Насколько я могла судить по рассказам Федора Михайловича, а также родственников и знакомых его, последние два года Мария Дмитриевна была не вполне нормальна. О предсмертных приступах помешательства Марии Дмитриевны говорил мне в 1867 г. лечивший ее в Москве врач Александр Павлович Иванов, муж сестры Федора Михайловича, Веры Михайловны. Иванов говорил, например, о том, что Мария Дмитриевна любила заводить стенные часы и заводила их до того, что пружина лопалась. Часто она жаловалась врачу, что в комнате много чертей. Тогда Иванов отворял форточку, платком выгонял чертей и после этого бедная больная успокаивалась.[173]

Such instances may have instead offered the inspiration for the devils seen by Liza and Father Ferapont in *Братья Карамазовы*. It is also not without reason to suggest that Mariia Dmitrievna may have had more such hallucinations that could have influenced other passages of Dostoevskii's work.

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[173] In Гроссман, *Семинарий по Достоевскому*, p. 57

4. SPLIT PERSONALITY

In introducing the aspect of split personality (or multiple personality disorder), it is useful to initially state that it should not be confused with schizophrenia, 'the disease that is most commonly associated with the concept of madness.'[174] While many of the symptoms are similar – such as speaking to oneself, abnormal sleeping patterns, and the blurring of imagination and perception – ultimately, schizophrenics assume different *identities*, whereas in multiple personality disorder a different aspect of the subject's *own personality* is assumed. The former often takes cues from other individuals, whereas, in the latter, character traits that are often latent or more normally suppressed are made manifest.[175]

However, the conditions are similar and, to a certain degree, can overlap or one become a secondary condition to the other. Hallucinations are a common symptom in both. Of multiple/split personality, Weston la Barre writes:

> In this dissociative state, two or more distinct, indeed contrastive, personalities seem alternately to 'take possession' of the conscious mind. … 'possession' is not so much invasion by an alien psyche as it is the overwhelming of conscious ego function by ego-alien primary process mentation, a sort of stylized REM-hallucinosis or auto-suggestion to which poorly integrated hysterics are prone in the service of the unconscious wish.[176]

The multiple or split personality sufferer, then, is prey to his subconscious desires (analogous to the 'unconscious wish') that are usually suppressed. These come to the fore and the character changes. In extreme cases, as is the case with Goliadkin in *Двойник*, these characters can be psychically projected into reality as a disturbingly vivid hallucination, or even projected on to a different person who the sufferer takes to be part of himself: a 'double', as it were.

The late eminent psychologist R. D. Laing wrote extensively on how such a condition develops.

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[174] John P. J. Pinel, *Biopsychology*, Allyn & Bacon, Boston, 2003, p. 462
[175] James W. Kalat, *Biological Psychology*, Brooks/Cole, 1998, p. 430
[176] La Barre, 'Anthropological perspectives', in Siegel and West, p. 17

> The individual's being is cleft in two, producing a disembodied self and a body that is a thing that the self looks at, regarding it at times as though it were just another thing in the world. The total body and also many 'mental' processes are severed from the self, which may continue to operate in a very restricted enclave (phantasying and observing), or it may appear to cease to function altogether[177].

In this state, Laing says, this 'unembodied' self starts to increasingly lose any feelings of self-worth and identity, and so falls out of touch with reality as the 'false' self asserts control and seems to live an independent life of its own.

> Instead of being the core of his true self, the body is felt as the core of a *false self*, which a detached, disembodied, 'inner', 'true' self looks on at with tenderness, amusement, or hatred as the case may be.
>
> Such a divorce of self from body deprives the unembodied self from direct participation in any aspect of the life of the world … The unembodied self, as onlooker at all the body does, engages in nothing directly. Its functions come to be observation, control, and criticism *vis-à-vis* what the body is experiencing and doing, and those operations which are usually spoken of as purely 'mental'[178].

This again mirrors Goliadkin's experiences, as he feels increasingly detached from reality while his double becomes increasingly successful. Laing continues:

> The self is not felt to participate in the doings of the false self or selves, and all its or their actions are felt to be increasingly false and futile. The self, on the other hand, shut up with itself, regards itself as the 'true' self and the persona as false. The individual complains of futility, of lack of spontaneity, but he may be cultivating his lack of spontaneity and thus aggravating his sense of futility. He says he is not real and is outside reality and not properly alive.[179]

As the individual becomes increasingly focused on this world of selves, he finds himself increasingly shut off to actual reality. Then, as the separated self becomes more dominant, it begins to turn on the increasingly helpless other:

> There is a tendency for the false self to assume *more and more of the characteristics of the person or persons upon whom compliance is based*. This assumption of the other person's characteristics may come to amount to an almost total impersonation of the other. The *hatred of the*

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[177] R. D. Laing, *The Divided Self – An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness*, Penguin, 1990, p. 162
[178] Ibid., p. 69
[179] Ibid., p. 74

> *impersonation* becomes evident when the impersonation begins to turn into a *caricature*.[180]

Yet, while such a subconscious process may seem self-destructive, it can actually be viewed as a kind of psychic self-defence mechanism that locks out the outer world that deigns to impose its structures on an unstable psyche, 'an attempt to preserve a being that is precariously structured.'[181] Laing adds:

> The divorce of the self from the body is both something which is painful to be borne, and which the sufferer desperately longs for someone to help mend, but it is also utilized as the basic means of defence. This in fact defines the essential dilemma. The self wishes to be wedded to and embedded in the body, yet is constantly afraid to lodge in the body for fear of there being subject to attacks and dangers which it cannot escape. Yet the self finds that though it is outside the body it cannot sustain the advantages that it might hope for in this position.[182]

The subject is therefore placed in an impossible situation, a catch-22 in which he or she feels it is inevitable that they will be destroyed, or at least negated. Without psychiatric help, madness ensues. The position of the 19th-century split personality, misunderstood and maltreated by society and fledgling psychologists, is even less certain: the demonic image of Goliadkin's doctor Rutenshpits at the end of *Двойник*, when the increasingly disembodied clerk is taken away in the doctor's carriage, suggests grim consequences for his increasingly erratic behaviour.

There is one other clinical explanation of Goliadkin's condition that may be considered. First posited by Lawrence Kohlberg in 1963[183], the rare 'autoscopic phenomenon' is in actual fact closely related to split personality; its appearance is certainly not indicative of a separate mental disease in its own right. It can, however, arise through brain injury and, intriguingly, temporal-lobe epilepsy.

The autoscopic phenomenon is defined purely as a visual hallucination of oneself, and therefore has little of the subconscious implications that arise from a split personality condition, which connects with many levels of Dostoevskii's fiction and experience. Dostoevskii's possible use of the autoscopic phenomenon in *Двойник*

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[180] Ibid., pp. 100-01
[181] Ibid., p. 77
[182] Ibid., pp. 161-62
[183] L. Kohlberg, 'Psychological Analysis and Literary Form: A Study of the Doubles in Dostoevsky', *Daedalus*, 1963, vol 92, 345-62

may, instead, be purely due to literary inspiration, as some of his favourite authors are suspected to have been afflicted and consequently used the motif of the double in their works, including E.T.A. Hoffmann and Edgar Allen Poe.[184] The motif in fact stretches back into antiquity (Plautus's *Menaechmi*, c.220BC) and has made not infrequent appearances in world literature since, a fact that cannot have escaped Dostoevskii, who was a voracious reader.

What cannot be disputed is the subconscious power of witnessing, and even communicating with, a perfect double. While the psychological arguments are convincing, the manifestation of the *doppelgänger* in the extreme split personality taps into a less rational, existential fear of insanity. A double may already exist within the mind of each of us, facets of character which may, at some given trigger or under certain duress, begin to dominate the self.

Goliadkin

Двойник is a text that can be construed in two principal ways with respect to imagery of the subconscious: it is either a self-contained dream text, or it details Goliadkin's multiple personality disorder and the gradual degeneration of his mind and grip on reality. Both of these interpretations reveal Goliadkin to be – alongside his obvious mental problems – a typical downtrodden Petersburg clerk of his day: meek, subservient, self-conscious, lonesome, with faint flickers of naïve ambition and *мечты* that are destined to be crushed. When painted with these broad psychological strokes, it is relatively easy to tie him to the character of Makar Devushkin in *Бедные люди* and suggest that Goliadkin grew out of his predecessor. However, Goliadkin is portrayed with far greater psychological depth, which helps the reader better understand his motives, actions, hopes and fears.

This understanding is gleaned through Goliadkin junior, the eponymous 'double' who essentially represents a different facet of Goliadkin's character. Whether psychic projection or extended dream, there is little doubt that the double is a manifestation of Goliadkin's subconscious. What ought to be determined is the

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[184] See Malcolm V. Jones, *Dostoyevsky after Bakhtin – Readings in Dostoyevsky's Fantastic Realism*, Cambridge University Press, 1990, pp. 39-40

extent to which he reveals the fundamental nature of Goliadkin's psychology; and in this sense it is better to view *Двойник* as an account of split personality, and not a dream-text. For if we can be certain of the principal, objective reality of the text – which can be grounded in, for example, the scenes at Goliadkin's office or with Dr Rutenshpits, and, indeed, the very social structure of contemporary tsarist society apparent in the novel – we can better gauge Goliadkin's reactions to this reality, and not to some arbitrary dream ether beyond all laws. We must therefore discard Mikhail Bakhtin's notion that the action of the text 'всецело развертывается в пределах самосознания Голядкина'[185], although we can still hold to his idea that Goliadkin's interaction with his double is 'драматизованный кризис его самосознания … драматизованная исповедь.'[186] Goliadkin's dilemma is an internalised 'исповедь', but it is also projected into the objective reality of the text. As William Leatherbarrow states, 'there is nothing intrinsically fantastic in the work, nothing that cannot be traced back to Golyadkin's weakening hold on reality.'[187] It is from this reality that we can better analyse Goliadkin's split personality and judge the revelatory effects that this mode of imagery of the subconscious has on the principal character himself.

It is also from this reality that we can rule out Goliadkin junior as a hallucination – this phenomenon is too consistent, recurring and interactive – and also as a product of schizophrenia. Despite the many symptoms on display in the text – for example, speaking to oneself, abnormal sleeping patterns and the blurring of dream, imagination and reality – schizophrenia can be viewed as a secondary condition to Goliadkin's multiple personality disorder.

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[185] Бахтин, p. 368

[186] Ibid., p. 372. Bakhtin's interpretation of *Двойник* is certainly not without worth, and he offers an insightful analysis of the narration: 'в рассказе мы не найдем ни одного момента, выходящего за пределы самосознания Голядкина, ни одного слова и ни одного тона, какие уже не входили бы в его диалог с двойником. Рассказчик подхватывает слова и мысли Голядкина, слова второго голоса его, усиливает заложенные в них дразнящие и издевательские тона и в этих тонах изображает каждый поступок, каждый жест, каждое движение Голядкина… второй голос Голядкина путем незаметных переходов сливается с голосом рассказчика; получается впечатление, что рассказ диалогически обращен к самому Голядкину, звенит в его собственных ушах, как дразнящий его голос другого, как голос его двойника, хотя формально рассказ обращен к читателю.' (Бахтин, p. 373) However, the idea of *Двойник* as a dream-text is not conducive to the study of split personality as a mode of imagery of the subconscious.

[187] William J. Leatherbarrow, *Fedor Dostoevsky*, Twayne Publishers, Boston, 1981, p. 42

The manner in which Goliadkin junior represents facets of Goliadkin senior's character that begin to dominate the self shows that the former is a challenge to the latter's identity. Unfortunately for Goliadkin, he fails the challenge, mostly through his lack of desire to act to control events and through his increasingly unstable mental state.

The text reveals the reasons behind the appearance of the double and of the protagonist's consequent slide into insanity as a result of his condition. There is, firstly, an indication that the double is a subconscious form of self-defence, as Laing posits. Goliadkin, 'дав себе, мимоходом честное слово каким-нибудь образом застрелиться в эту же ночь' (1:133); and, while running aimlessly through the streets of Petersburg, 'господин Голядкин глядит теперь так, как будто сам от себя куда-то спрятаться хочет, как будто сам от себя убежать куда-нибудь хочет … даже совсем уничтожиться, не быть, в прах обратиться.' (1:139) The appearance of the double effectively prevents these statements of self-destructive intent being carried out.

Perversely, this self-defence stems from Goliadkin's self-hatred – evident in the two Goliadkins labelling each other as 'enemies' (senior says to junior, 'Это речь врагов моих' (1:202), and junior to senior, 'Это враги мои говорят' (1:169)) – which in turn is a product of his inner shame, in part due to his lowly social position and esteem among his peers (and indeed, his inferiors – his servant Petrushka, for example). Upon seeing his double at work the morning after his appearance, he is referred to as 'ужас господина Голядкина […] стыд господина Голядкина […] вчерашний кошмар господина Голядкина' (1:146). 'Он даже стал, наконец, сомневаться в собственном существовании своем' (1:147), as if to detail the double's possible purpose: to make Goliadkin question his own identity, question his own character and perhaps even improve it – for he seems embroiled in self-loathing.

This stems in no large part from Goliadkin's sheer lack of assertiveness, an attribute that is brought vividly to light through his double as the latter gradually begins to usurp the former's place in work, society and home. Their first 'physical' struggle, as it were, is pivotal – and appropriately, it is from this point that Dostoevskii begins to consistently attach the suffixes of 'старший' and 'младший' to the two Goliadkins.

In a brief struggle, the double, relatively easily, wins possession of some important documents to be taken to the office of the department head Andrei Filippovich, leaving a stunned Goliadkin standing uselessly, making no attempt to win them back, or at least demand an explanation for the struggle: 'Господин Голядкин-старший остался как бы прикованным к месту, держа в руках ножичек и как будто приготовляясь что-то скоблить им…' (1:164-65)

This inability to act, to stand up for himself, is indicative of Goliadkin's relationship with his double for the rest of the text. Very rarely does he try to amend matters, and even when he does so it seems clear that he is hopelessly chasing what cannot be caught. On one of the rare occasions when he confronts Goliadkin junior, the latter says: 'Шалишь, братец, Яков Петрович, шалишь! Хитрить мы будем с тобой, Яков Петрович, хитрить.' (1:167) This is a rare display of the double's intent: to undermine Goliadkin while eluding him. The psychic projection of his disembodied self is always one step ahead of him, and is always able to elude the true self's half-hearted attempts to catch up.

Half-heartedness is indeed a major reason why the double triumphs over Goliadkin. Whenever Goliadkin attempts to analyse the situation he either gives up, resigns himself to some confused, sketchy explanation – 'Это, вероятно, как-нибудь там померещилось, или вышло что-нибудь другое, а не то, что действительно было; или, верно, что я сам ходил… и себя как-нибудь там принял совсем за другого' – or repeats to himself that 'это совершенно невозможное дело' (1:166), without fully accepting it and doing something about it. Whenever he is struck by inspiration, it turns out to be false: 'Какой-то новый свет провивался сквозь весь неясный и загадочный туман, уже два дня окружавший его. Герой наш отчасти начинал понимать… […] Но только что хотел было он привстать, как тут же, в немощи и бессилии, упал опять на прежнее место.' (1:182) Even the vial of medicine, the 'темная, красновато-отвратительная жидкость' (1:208) he finds in his pocket, is quickly forgotten about as a possible solution to his problems. This prescription from Dr Rutenshpits may have the answers Goliadkin is looking for, it may resolve matters medically; but the bottle is smashed, and he remains in confused denial of his position.

Ultimately, Goliadkin cannot grasp the psychological magnitude of the appearance of his own double. He repeatedly fails to effectively question or confront Goliadkin junior, which only strengthens the double's position. Whenever he begins to approach understanding he gives up, either because he is unconsciously too scared of the truth or because he doesn't have the will to pursue that train of thought. This inability to communicate with this other, projected personality ultimately means that a reconciliation of the two personalities on a subconscious level is all but impossible.

This is fully confirmed in the two Goliadkins' second struggle, which is preceded by a final attempt at reconciliation. This ends not just in failure, but humiliation. In their conversation in a café, Goliadkin cannot communicate effectively with his double – that is, he cannot reconcile these two aspects of his character. He stumbles over his words, is naïve, gullible and submissive in the conversation; whereas Goliadkin junior is assertive and cunning, as well as arrogant and rude without reply. The scene is brought to a fitting end when Goliadkin junior abruptly insults the other and leaves. Goliadkin follows him onto his drozhki and, as previously in the office, a struggle ensues – another struggle for the mind, which Goliadkin junior wins again. And again, it is because Goliadkin gives up: 'господин Голядкин всё позабыл и решил, что всё это совсем ничего, и что это так только, как-нибудь, необъяснимым образом делается, и протестовать по этому случаю было бы лишним и совершенно потерянным делом…' (1:206) At this point, he is thrown from the drozhki.

Goliadkin's descent into insanity then increasingly gathers pace, as he flees aimlessly through the stormy streets of St Petersburg, almost like a ghost, accompanied by the shouts and screams of people he almost knocks over. Even when he stops to try to gather his thoughts he finds it is impossible, as the barriers between perception, imagination and memory become unstable: 'мысли как-то ни о чем не вязались в его голове. Мелькали какие-то лица, припоминались, то неясно, то резко, какие-то давно забытые происшествия, лезли в голову какие-то мотивы каких-то глупых песен… Тоска, тоска была неестественная!' (1:220)

The unhinging of Goliadkin is mirrored in the increasingly emotive tone of the narrator, who begins the novella in measured omniscience, but soon begins to

oscillate between objective and subjective positions. He increasingly takes Goliadkin senior's side against his 'бесстыдный' (1:204), 'отвратительный' (1:224), 'вероломный' (1:227), 'подлый' (1:228), 'бесполезный' (1:195) double. The latter adjective is particularly harsh, as Goliadkin junior proves to be more resourceful than senior could ever be. Bakhtin, we remember, goes so far as to assert that Goliadkin's own voice gradually blurs with the narrator and the text becomes entirely confessional.[188]

Fittingly, by the final meeting of the two in the house of Olsufii Ivanovich, the father of the woman Goliadkin desires, the text seems to have disintegrated into an airy, dreamlike style with sketchily drawn, fleeting details, as if to underline this dilution of the protagonist's character, his 'evaporation' into some kind of spirit. He is being negated. From the double being the waxing projection of Goliadkin, Goliadkin is now the waning projection of the double, who has found favour in the circle of Olsufii Ivanovich and Andrei Filippovich.

The fact that this outcome is foretold in Goliadkin's extended *сон* indicates his identity crisis neurosis. In this *сон* his double 'ясно доказал, что Голядкин-старший и вместе с тем настоящий – вовсе не настоящий, а поддельный, а что он настоящий, что, наконец, Голядкин-старший вовсе не то, чем он кажется, а такой-то и сякой-то, и следовательно, не должен и не имеет права принадлежать к обществу людей.' (1:185) Subsequently, Goliadkin junior, having destroyed Goliadkin's dreamed-of reputation by attaining it himself, ultimately makes sure of his domination over the meeker Goliadkin by utterly overwhelming him with more successful replicas: 'некуда было убежать от совершенно подобных […] так что вся столица запрудилась наконец совершенно подобными'. (1:187)

This *сон* can be seen as a microcosm of the story as a whole: Goliadkin junior's sudden appearance leads to Goliadkin's complete social exclusion, and the dream's end encapsulates his psychosis as he is overwhelmed by his alter-ego. It also encapsulates Goliadkin's deep subconscious fear of losing his individuality in the contemporary bureaucratic machine. Maria Kravchenko writes:

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[188] Бахтин, pp. 179-81

> His fear that he will not be recognised as a human being, that people will believe that his hallucinatory double is the real Goliadkin, is a very real one. As he vacillates between humiliation and pathological retreat from real and imaginary fears his actions become more confused and incomprehensible[189].

In comparison, Goliadkin junior's actions become more calculatingly sycophantic. And it is in outlining the steps in society that Goliadkin junior takes – however sickeningly ingratiating they may be – that the psychic 'self-defence' mechanism of the double reveals a more far-reaching purpose than simply to prevent Goliadkin's suicide. For it would seem that the double represents the more socially successful facets of Goliadkin's character, which, having previously lain buried in his subconscious, are now trying to escape the failing facets. That is, the double's behaviour implies that if Goliadkin is to *survive* much longer in tsarist society – if he is to overcome his inner shame and self-loathing – then he must *play the game* of tsarist society. This desire for social success is evident at the start of the text in Goliadkin's plans to gain entry to Klara Olsuf'evna's ball and ultimately win her affections; and also more subconsciously in his envious acknowledgement of the double's skill in society: 'Желал бы я знать, чем он именно берет в обществе высокого тона? […] И пойдет человек, клятву даю, что пойдет далеко […] Желал бы я еще узнать, что именно такое он всем им нашептывает?' (1:200)

Kravchenko concurs that 'the Double is in fact personification of everything that Goliadkin misses in himself, all that he wants to be, did he dare so much as dream of it. The vividness and reality of the hallucination is an indication of the degree of intensity of his secret desire and of how much he has suppressed.'[190]

This is, admittedly, a self-defeating outcome. Such pandering to etiquette and sycophantic behaviour is in itself a mask for most; and, moreover, the double's constant undermining of Goliadkin, his persistent game of toadying one-upmanship, eventually leads to Goliadkin's own removal to, in all likelihood, a mental institution. Dostoevskii's subtext posits the question: how many other socially ambitious failures of his day also descended into insanity, or at least destitution,

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[189] Kravchenko, p. 32
[190] Ibid.

because they could not meet their aspirations or did not want to stoop to the sycophancy that the service demanded?

This shallow game of masks only serves to underline Dostoevskii's consistent theme, particularly in his work of the 1840s, of the hopelessness of life for the downtrodden clerk of tsarist St Petersburg. Even the increasingly successful double acknowledges that the life of such an ingratiating toady is a hollow one: 'дескать, что уж тут твердость характера! какая, дескать, у нас с тобой, Яков Петрович, будет твердость характера!' (1:185) he says to Goliadkin senior during the latter's *сон*. Between junior's sycophancy and senior's lack of assertiveness there is little 'твердость'. This word in itself also highlights Goliadkin's increasing 'evaporation' from society, and hints at the purely non-physical, subconscious phenomenon of the double.

Ultimately, it is pursuing the futile dream of Klara Olsuf'evna's hand, and having that dream destroyed, that triggers the appearance of Goliadkin's double. Joseph Frank writes that 'the appearance of the double reveals all the hidden ambitions that constitute a timid revolt against the injustices of the social order by which he is confined.'[191] Goliadkin dared to revolt, to rise above his place. But he is brutally beaten down and thrown out of the higher society he has dared to invade, just as he is symbolically thrown out of the ball. However, his subconscious ambition has been stoked and swells in power until it manifests in his double, who then increasingly assumes control by showing Goliadkin how to 'go far' ('пойти далеко').

> He realizes to his despair that, as his presence at the party does not agree with the conception of reality held by others, he will not be able to realize his ideal. With the loss of his own idea of reality, he can no longer find his way in life. He has not been able to assert his true ego, and now he cannot distinguish real from unreal.[192]

Yet, despite his moments of envy for his double's etiquette, Goliadkin cannot conform to such sycophancy. Ultimately, he perishes from 'his realization of the

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[191] Frank, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, p. 324
[192] Temira Pachmuss, *F. M. Dostoevsky – Dualism and Synthesis of the Human Soul*, Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale, 1963, p. 27

impossibility of asserting himself as an individual without violating the morality that has been bred into his bones and which keeps him in submission.'[193]

The motif of the double as a symbol of society's ills was recognised by Dostoevskii's friend Valerian Maikov:

> Вспомните этого бедного, болезненно самолюбивого Голядкина, вечно боящагося за себя, вечно мучимого стремлением не уронить себя ни в каком случае и ни перед каким лицом и вместе с тем постоянно уничтожающагося … постоянно соглашающагося обрезывать свои претензии на личность, лишь бы пребыть *в своем праве* … вспомните все это и спросите себя: нет ли в вас самих чего-нибудь голядкинского, в чем только никому нет охоты сознаться, но что вполне объясняется удивительною гармонией, царствующею в человеческом обществе?..[194]

This raises a disturbing theory that the entire social order of Dostoevskii's time was built on such a 'game of masks', as is presented to us in *Двойник*. There is, naturally, a veneer of 'acceptability' in the higher echelons of any society, but here it pervades right down Peter I's table of ranks like a rotten core. Russian society may have had the appearance of harmony – but at what cost to the freedom and individuality of its citizens?

Temira Pachmuss takes a different spin on the cause of Goliadkin's split personality, viewing it as a clash between personal perceptions of reality: on the one hand, the accepted order of hierarchy; and on the other, Goliadkin's attempt to distort this order by altering other people's perception of him.

> [Dostoevskii] considers that the world which is commonly perceived by the senses, the rational world, or objective reality, is not real, since people always see reality as they want to see it, as they want to interpret it to themselves. This conviction of the writer finds its artistic expression in Golyadkin's experiences. His colleagues know him as a humble clerk… This Golyadkin, however, is not the real Golyadkin; he exists only in the mind of his colleagues. Previously he made his conduct conform to their preconceived notions of how a person of his social standing should behave. He has simply adjusted his character to his situation in life, but he is earnestly resolved to be courageous and lay claims to what he considers his human rights. Naturally enough, Golyadkin's ambitions do not conform to the notions of reality held by

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[193] Frank, *The Seeds of Revolt*, p. 307
[194] Валериан Майков, *Критические опыты (1845-1847)*, Пантеон Литературы, Санкт-Петербург, 1891, p. 327

> his superiors. The question which Dostoevsky is posing here seems to be, What is reality? Is it their idea of Golyadkin, or his own conception of himself?[195]

Quite rightly, Pachmuss concludes that '"real reality" lies in the irrational sphere of Golyadkin's mind', and not in the accepted reality of tsarist society.[196] This is an additional condemnation of the established order.

Laing goes even further in suggesting that Goliadkin actively seeks his own 'displacement', or re-creation as an entirely different character. This connects back to the idea of the double as a subconscious self-defence mechanism: it prevents Goliadkin's suicide by asserting and projecting the socially successful facets of his character. As a subconscious process, he has no control over his double's actions. Referring to the passage where Goliadkin desires his own 'annihilation' just before the double's first appearance, Laing states: 'He himself is ousting himself from the place in the world his very existence entitles him to.' He continues:

> After his encounter with his double, he discovers that this man is ousting him in every possible way from his position in existence until he completely takes his place in the world. Yet just before he is taken away to the madhouse, Golyadkin has a glimpse of his 'pernicious twin', whom he sees for a moment as 'apparently not pernicious at all, not even his twin, but a stranger and a perfectly amiable person in his own right'.
>
> … he himself had been intentionally seeking to annihilate himself, seeking not to be himself. This project at the very heart of his existence was a secret even from himself that he remained unable to grasp, unable to realize.[197]

It is this final realisation that hits Goliadkin as he is taken away, presumably for his own safety, by Dr Rutenshpits. Laing's account also backs up the diagnosis of the double as an autoscopic phenomenon. Goliadkin's neuroses, desires and self-hatred have become manifest and play out the role of the perfect aspiring social mover.

Of course, *Двойник* marks the start of one of Dostoevskii's greatest and most consistent characterological themes: the doubling or pairing of characters in his

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[195] Pachmuss, pp. 24-25
[196] Ibid., p. 25. Nevertheless, Pachmuss, perhaps simplistically, regards most of the action of *Двойник* as a dream.
[197] R. D. Laing, *Self and Others*, Tavistock, 1969, p. 115

works, which has been extensively commented on. On Goliadkin's influence on later characters, Frank writes that

> this internal split between self-image and truth – between what a person wishes to believe about himself, and what he really is – is Dostoevsky's first grasp of a character-type that became his hallmark as a writer. Golyadkin is the ancestor of all of Dostoevsky's great split personalities, who are always confronted with their quasi-doubles or doubles (whether in the form of other 'real' characters or as hallucinations) in the memorable scenes of the great novels[198].

Yet, despite the continual use of this kind of 'split personality', Dostoevskii makes a definite shift away from the subconscious traits of this theme. We could say that almost every instance of doubling after this work is based in the reality of the text's events. From here on, 'his doubles will either be clear-cut hallucinations, or they are what may be called "quasi-doubles" – characters who exist in their own right, but reflect some internal aspect of another character in a strengthened form.'[199]

The reason for this shift seems to lie in Dostoevskii's admission in his *Дневник писателя* of January 1877 that the 'form' of *Двойник* had been wrong, and that even after substantial revisions made 15 years previously – one of which is the 'accepted' text we have today – 'эта вещь совсем неудавшаяся, и если б я теперь принялся за эту идею и изложил ее вновь, то взял бы совсем другую форму' (26:65). However, it is evident that many of the additional plans Dostoevskii had for Goliadkin and his double, which ultimately did not come to fruition, eventually came to light in other works: 'What was only potential in the earlier work is now developed in a fashion that endows his creations with a larger artistic significance, and converts the original comic pathos into a movement of despairing rebellion.'[200]

For example, the double-faceted character resurfaces in the Underground Man, who is again caught between the dichotomy of meek subservience and all-conquering *мечты*. In the author's notebooks, we first see the assimilation of radical ideology into the doubled personality (no longer 'split' in the clinical sense) which Dostoevskii had hoped to incorporate into his revision of *Двойник* – and which

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[198] Frank, *The Seeds of Revolt*, p. 311
[199] Ibid.
[200] Frank, *The Stir of Liberation*, p. 70

eventually found its way into his works of the time, including *Записки из подполья* and *Преступление и наказание*. With the help of his double, Goliadkin was to have joined a revolutionary circle, similar to the one Dostoevskii had been a part of. A notebook of 1861-62 states: 'Мечты сделаться Наполеоном, Периклом, предводителем русского восстания. Либерализм и революция, восстановляющая со слезами Louis XVI и слушающаяся его (от доброты).' (1:434) In the following notebook (dated 1862-64), Goliadkin has a dream which bears striking similarities to Raskol'nikov's apocalyptic *сон* at the end of *Преступление и наказание*: '(Кислород и водород перевертывают ему голову. Нет более всевышнего существа.) Что же будет с министерством и с начальством? *Сон*. Всё упраздено. Люди вольные. Все *бьют друг друга* явно, на улице. *Обеспечивают себя* (откладывают копейку).' (1:435)

As well as hinting at the revolutionary ideology that replaces God with science and reason, which the Underground Man rails against, it shows the final consequence of such ideas, which are given full body in Raskol'nikov's dream and leads to his spiritual conversion.

Perhaps the only exceptions to Dostoevskii's subsequent 'externalisation' of the double into reality are the hallucinations of Stavrogin and, in particular, Ivan Karamazov – both of which display a form of interaction and could be viewed as verging on a split personality. Although Ivan's 'devil' has been defined as a hallucination, it is still a product of the character's mental instability; and while the devil may not be an exact *doppelgänger* of Ivan, it does display and ultimately represent, like Goliadkin junior, many facets of the principal character's subconscious. It was perhaps in the portrayal of Ivan's internal nemesis – the return of the double as a type of subconscious imagery – that Dostoevskii finally found the fullest expression to the idea he felt he had not justifiably executed in *Двойник*.

Dostoevskii

The only mention of a mental illness in the author similar to Goliadkin's can be found in one of Dostoevskii's letters to General Eduard Ivanovich Totleben, the brother of an old classmate at engineering college, whom he was petitioning to

support his return to St Petersburg after his Siberian exile. While there are echoes of his 'nervous illness', Dostoevskii also details a loss of reason, which, the letter implies, explains his subjugation to the revolutionary ideals of the Petrashevskii and Palm-Durov circles, associations which led to his arrest. He writes:

> Я был два года сряду болен, болезнию странною, нравственною. Я впал в ипохондрию. Было даже время, что я терял рассудок. Я был слишком раздражителен, с впечатлительностью, разбитою болезненно, со способностию искажать самые обыкновенные факты и придавать им другой вид и размеры. Но я чувствовал, что, хотя эта болезнь и имела сильное враждебное влияние на судьбу мою, она была бы очень плохим оправданием и даже унизительным. (28/1:224)

There is an element of exaggeration in this letter, a claim for sickness that was not as extreme as Dostoevskii makes out – and not at all as extreme as Goliadkin's – yet this account can be related to the idea that many of Dostoevskii's later characters were afflicted by a similar 'нравственная болезнь' that could be equated to a type of mental illness.

Most obviously, Raskol'nikov – the victim of those parasitic (as it were), revolutionary, 'странные «недоконченные» идеи, которые носятся в воздухе'[201] that goad him on in his quest to become a 'Napoleon' – has two facets: his cold, clinical side that insists on adhering to his theory; and the loving son, brother and friend, whose strong, instinctive feelings he has to keep suppressed if he is to go through with that theory. Other examples include Kirillov in *Бесы*, who only just follows through on his nihilist theories on life by killing himself, after some horrifying moments of cold mortality; and Ippolit in *Идиот*, another nihilist whose cold proclamations are offset by his emotional lashing out at the injustice of his chronic illness.

It could be argued then too, that perhaps Dostoevskii was slightly mentally unbalanced by the revolutionary thoughts that drew him towards the Petrashevskii circle, and deeper into the satellite Palm-Durov circle, and caused him 'to lose his reason' ('терять рассудок'); and it was only his arrest and exile that effectively

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[201] From Dostoevskii's letter to Mikhail Katkov, editor of *Русский вестник*, containing the premise for *Преступление и наказание*. (28/2.136-39)

cured him. The letter to Totleben, if taken literally, can therefore be construed as a precious piece of evidence to show the pathological effects of radical politics on the subconscious. This is certainly the opinion of James Rice, who believes the letter displays 'an autobiographic memory of pathology which had been experienced and which in some form and degree perhaps persisted throughout life. In this sense, the letter to Totleben is a unique and invaluable psychological bridge between the author's life and his art of fiction.'[202]

Rice also neatly sums up the thoughts of Carus – the works of whom Dostoevskii knew well – on the matter of civil rebellion as illness, from his *Über Geistes-Epidemien der Menschheit* (1852):

> All the great upheaval of the folk generally termed 'revolutions' had been in part fantasy and delirium, in part true periodic madness, and in some cases these revolutionary illnesses of mankind had been illuminated by 'lightning-like flashes of truly great ideas.' Perhaps they had been necessary storms, to clear the atmosphere…
>
> … The mood of the masses… had shifted rapidly to follow swindling world-benefactors and fanatical heroes… Events unfolded like scenes in a violent nightmare. No doubt, says Carus, Europeans were still too close to these events to grasp their meaning in world history, or to say whether or not these things had been the phenomena of yet one more genuine spiritual epidemic. But the question was bound to be asked … Here in clear outline was the great allegorical image and existential dilemma cultivated in Dostoevsky's mature fiction, of the psychic illness of contemporary society misguided by revolutionary leaders who were spiritually possessed, in league with Satan. Here too was a view of the 1848 revolution and social activists of the era which reflected (or anticipated) Dostoevsky's recollection of his own role among the Petrashevtsy, an experience of mental disorder and contagion by widespread spiritual epidemic.[203]

Receding further into Dostoevskii's past, we can see the possible causes for the author's attraction to such circles. It is in the 'game of masks' of tsarist society that we can trace the boldest line between Dostoevskii and his creation of Goliadkin. In the 1830s and 1840s Dostoevskii himself experienced Goliadkin's alienation from the higher social circles, and expressed his desire for fame and wealth that Goliadkin

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[202] Rice, p. 20
[203] Ibid., p. 146

seeks in the hand of Klara Olsuf'evna. It is in the gulf between these poles of lofty *мечта* and crushing reality that Goliadkin's double takes form.

This is made evident in the scene in *Двойник* in which Goliadkin's drozhki, rented at great personal expense, is overtaken by that of his superior Andrei Filippovich, and Goliadkin frantically weighs up his possible reactions: 'Поклониться иль нет? Отозваться иль нет? Признаться иль нет? – думал в неописанной тоске наш герой, – или прикинуться, что не я, а что кто-то другой, разительно схожий со мною, и смотреть как ни в чем не бывало? Именно не я, не я, да и только!' (1:113) Frank attributes this dithering between two faces – that of the suppressed clerk and the ambitious 'mask' – to the release of 'the psychic mechanism… that will soon lead to the appearance of the double'[204]. While it is not as momentous event as Goliadkin's rejection from the ball, it is nevertheless a telling moment in his mounting psychosis, revealing at an early stage the two sides of his character. Frank adds: 'With one part of his character … Mr Golyadkin likes to imagine himself as an all-conquering hero; but with another he knows that he is quite incapable of sustaining such a role, and is, in fact, timid as a mouse.'[205] The former 'hero' – or at least Goliadkin's idealised impression of one – will become personified in the double, while Goliadkin senior will remain the 'mouse'.

Dostoevskii, too, was reportedly shy in company and found it difficult to assert himself in social situations in his early years in St Petersburg. This was largely because his mind was attuned to the world of literary romance (while his outward appearance suffered), meaning he had no idea of how to react to social occasions. Louis Breger has noted a definite split in personality here, which echoes Laing's analysis of the disembodied self:

> The false self is associated with the body, which is often treated as a meaningless 'thing', that is as if it were not alive. Many who knew Dostoevsky during this period note his apparent lack of concern about his body and his unhealthy appearance. The real self is tied to ideas and fantasies which may be kept entirely to oneself or shared with one or two others. This part of the person is experienced as 'alive' though, paradoxically, it may have the least contact with the world of others.

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[204] Frank, *The Seeds of Revolt*, p. 301
[205] Ibid.

> Because the fantasy or inner-self has existed in an isolated state it has not been tempered by reality testing. It is often heroic, grandiose, and possessed of great powers; destructive fantasies run to extremes. While such a divided state of existence evolves out of necessity it is a delicate equilibrium in two ways. First, people have a need for real contact and attachment to others; withdrawal into a fantasy world eventually leads to intense loneliness. Second, despite our rather amazing capacity for defensiveness, splits, and dissociations of all sorts, we are also motivated toward the creation of a coherent ego, a unified self. So the divided individual is impelled both to maintain his split existence and to heal it through contact with others.[206]

Even though Dostoevskii's ambitions for literary success mark out his desire to also become an 'all-conquering hero' like Goliadkin, his timidity persisted even after he had realised his *мечта* following the resounding success of *Бедные люди*. Dostoevskii found that fame did not automatically mean he became a 'hero'; in fact, it seemed to create a whole new set of problems, including the pressure of maintaining his success with his next work, and being treated as an inferior by the established authors of Belinskii's circle, such as Turgenev and Nekrasov – something such a self-glorifying ego could not bear. Breger adds:

> The self that emerged in the Belinsky circle was grandiose and egocentric in ways that offended others and brought forth criticism and hostility rather than the adulation Dostoevsky desired. … Their criticism and hostility felt like an attack on his very core. He had taken a chance on coming alive, on being reborn into this world of writers and lovers of literature, and they were killing him. Only the false, outer self was confirmed, the self of mediocrity and conformity, the part of him associated with his body, which he now experienced as sick and falling apart.[207]

Fame and literary success did not bring happiness, and perhaps Dostoevskii injected some of this message into Goliadkin's doomed ambitions to higher social standing. Moreover, as the more assertive traits of Goliadkin come forth in his double, so do they appear in Dostoevskii's argumentative nature and rebukes to the barbs aimed against him in Belinskii's circle:

> [Goliadkin's] pride is submerged and he is driven to assert it, he tries to fulfil his aspirations, just as the author was doing at this time in his life. But his inner self has been isolated too long, he has almost no skill with

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[206] Breger, p. 113
[207] Ibid., p. 114

> other people, and, when his efforts to act in the world go awry, he becomes more defensive. Instead of learning from his mistakes he is more threatened and blames others: projection increases.[208]

As Dostoevskii's angry defensiveness increased, so did the cynicism of his supposed peers' manipulative put-downs. The author's long-cherished dream rapidly turned into a nightmare as his uncontrollable inner rage made him the object of even greater ridicule. Belinskii's ultimate denunciation of *Двойник* was the final straw for Dostoevskii and he retreated from society. It was the broken dreams of the downtrodden clerk (Goliadkin) and fledgling writer (Dostoevskii) that ultimately led the author to seek out the means to a brighter social future in the rationalist Palm-Durov and Petrashevskii circles – and a different kind of psychological 'illness', which Goliadkin was also to suffer in the planned rewrite of *Двойник*.

One further clue to the author's own experience of split personality lies in a passage of *Бедные люди*, which highlights its often-neglected influence on *Двойник*, particularly where imagery of the subconscious is concerned. Makar Devushkin is recalling being summoned to His Excellency's office: 'Задрожало у меня сердце в груди … я так испугался, как никогда еще в жизни со мной не было. Я прирос к стулу, – и как ни в чем не бывало, точно и не я.' (1:92) It is a deeply traumatic moment for the meek Devushkin, who is used to a daily order and normality in his poverty-stricken daily life, and has perhaps never even seen the opulent head of his department. There is a desire for self-annihilation here, a denial of one's existence – 'точно и не я' – that mirrors Goliadkin's wish to vanish following his own unfavourable exposure to high society. Frank writes: 'Here is exactly the reaction of terror that leads to the splitting of Golyadkin's personality and the appearance of the double: the internal process is simply given dramatic reality.'[209] Unfortunately we cannot know how much this episode was based on Dostoevskii's own experience; whether, for example, he may have been summoned to his superior at engineering college. However, no double of Devushkin appears, for a number of reasons. Firstly, this is only one isolated episode of trauma for Devushkin – and though he may harbour pleasant *мечты*, they do not approach the lofty ambitions of Goliadkin's.

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[208] Ibid., p. 124
[209] Frank, *The Seeds of Revolt*, p. 298

Furthermore, the episode ends happily for Devushkin, who in private receives a substantial gift from his superior.

There is also the case of Dostoevskii's curious letter to his brother Mikhail during the writing of *Двойник*, which refers to Goliadkin as if he were an actual person:

> Подлец страшный, приступу нет к нему; никак не хочет вперед идти, претендуя, что еще ведь он не готов, а что он теперь покамест сам по себе, что он ничего, ни в одном глазу, а что, пожалуй, если уж на то пошло, то и он тоже может, почему же и нет, отчего же и нет? Он ведь такой, как и все, он только так себе, а то такой, как и все. Что ему! Подлец, страшный подлец! Раньше половины ноября никак не соглашается окончить карьеру. Он уж теперь объяснился с его превосходительством и, пожалуй, (отчего же нет) готов подать в отставку. А меня, своего сочинителя, ставит в крайне негодное положение. (28/1:113)

Goliadkin here comes to life, just as Goliadkin junior does in the text. Naturally, this could be seen simply as a display of artistic hubris to impress his brother; but it may also be viewed as part of Dostoevskii's creative process for a character with which he imbued many of his personal attributes. It seems as if the author is giving Goliadkin a trial 'run-out', so to speak, before finishing his work, as if to gain approval for his realism. Consequently, the character of Goliadkin almost becomes a double of Dostoevskii himself, and displays some of the worst (or at least, socially unacceptable) attributes of the author, as Goliadkin junior does to Goliadkin. What makes this particularly evident is the assertive manner in which he is described in the letter: he seems positively stubborn, and fully autonomous, and will play his role in exactly the manner of his choosing. This is evidently Dostoevskii's imaginative way of describing a bout of writer's block or creative difficulty; but it also echoes Goliadkin's early, almost paternal instinct towards his double when he allows him to spend the night at his apartment. However, Goliadkin soon loses control of his relationship with Goliadkin junior, just as Dostoevskii seems to do with his own creation. Aspects of both of their subconscious assume a will of their own.

Ultimately, as Breger notes, *Двойник* was to encapsulate the writer's own concerns and fears over his standing in society, and, to an extent, even in reality: for his contact with reality had left him yearning for a return to the fantasies in his head.

> Turning his conflicts and troubling emotional states into a novel required him to work this inchoate material into an organized form. … private

> preoccupations and concerns were transformed into understandable public communications. This was a way of bringing these sides of himself into contact with reality. In other words, as he wrote about the extreme and ridiculous aspects of Golyadkin, he gained some distance and objectivity – some insight – into his own related difficulties.[210]

Particular mention must also be made of the experiences of a Dr Iustin E. Diad'kovskii (1784-1841), whose clinical memoirs were reviewed in *Отечественные записки* around the same time Dostoevskii was drafting *Двойник*. As Rice notes,[211] the writer would certainly have been interested in Diad'kovskii's writings. A colleague of both Dostoevskii's father and uncle, Diad'kovskii, who also suffered from 'падучая болезнь', claimed that his double had appeared to him regularly in his youth until the age of 22. Shortly after the journal's scathing review of the memoirs (written by someone Dostoevskii knew, Rice conjectures), the draft for *Двойник* underwent a significant revision. 'If Diad'kovsky … had not existed, it would have been possible to invent him,' Rice writes. Perhaps Dostoevskii *re*-invented him in the character of Goliadkin.

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[210] Breger, p. 126
[211] Rice, pp. 247-251

5. DREAMS

While in reality opinions on dreams (*сны*) differ wildly – from the basic tenet that they are an aid to restorative sleep; to the psychoanalytic theories that dreams can unearth repressed memories and hold the key to unconscious behaviour; to the idea that they are memories of the childlike state[212]; or even a 'safety valve' for inner madness[213] – dreams in fiction invariably serve a purpose to the author. In some cases this purpose can be purely stylistic; for example, as a simple device to embellish atmosphere. But for many authors – and Dostoevskii, who uses dream episodes across his entire body of works, is a case in point – they are an opportunity with which to present aspects of the dreamer's character, perhaps confirming or embellishing traits, or presenting entirely new facets.

The imagery of dreams is a feature of some of the very earliest literature (Homer being the prominent example) and seems to have been a prevalent part of Russian literature from its earliest forms.[214] It is clear that many of the authors Dostoevskii was so well versed in employed bold imagery of this subconscious type, principally Karamzin, Zhukovskii, Griboedov, Pushkin and Gogol'. Clear lines of influence can be drawn to Dostoevskii's penchant for such a narrative mode, particularly as his forebears had shown how it could be used to aid characterisation, structure and theme.

Unlike reality, dreams in Dostoevskii's fiction do not pass the dreamer by largely unnoticed. Subconscious insights can be construed even through characters' relations of dreams to others, or even when dreams are only sketchily detailed or briefly mentioned. Their effect is always notable. However, the most effective and striking dreams form extended episodes of their own, are boldly drawn – sometimes even more so than reality – and are rich in symbolism.

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[212] According to psychologist Jean Piaget. See *Play, Dreams and Imitation in Childhood* (trans. C. Gattegno and F.M. Hodgson), Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1962; and Barksdale, pp. 47-48

[213] Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *Dreams, Illusions and Other Realities*, The University of Chicago Press, 1984, pp. 49-50

[214] In *Dreams and the Unconscious in Nineteenth-Century Russian Fiction* (1984), Katz has documented the dream's role in Russian literature from the first Church Slavonic translations of biblical scriptures and lives of the saints.

These messages from the subconscious are therefore presented to the reader 'loaded' with meaning. Elizabeth Dalton's psychoanalytic viewpoint regards dreams as

> a 'primary process' that ignores the realistic considerations of time and space and the elementary logical principles that operate in conscious thinking. Despite its deficiencies, this primitive mode of mental function is in some ways more immediate, more rapid and economical, than the 'secondary process' associated with consciousness.[215]

This type of imagery of the subconscious, then, offers a condensed, compact view of the psyche and corresponding character traits that cannot be immediately determined from the point of view of consciousness, and which are often hidden or lie dormant. 'Dreams play a great role,' Donald Fanger says, 'as the fullest expressions of potentiality.'[216]

Operating at deep subconscious levels, dreams appear to harness universal archetypes that embody the experience of man – what Jung termed the 'collective unconscious'. While it is difficult to connect every dream to such archetypes, this psychic realm still serves as a useful analogy of a 'well' of symbolic content deep within every man and woman (and, indeed, character) that can be applied to fictional dreams. Wendy O'Flaherty describes this as the 'dream ether',

> the memory built into the divine nature of our mental substance, our mythical DNA. The dream ether holds forever the echoes of all the voices and images that have been transmitted over it. Though we can seldom reach down to touch it, it is always there for us to touch.[217]

This naturally implies that all of man's good and evil, both his moral values and immoral vices, are contained within. Imagery of the subconscious offers a view into this vast spectrum of experience.

Heed must also be paid to the theory of engrams, which, contrary to the idea of a collective unconscious, posits that dreams largely take their cue from conscious reality, through experience, culture and memory:

> life experiences affect the brain in such a way as to leave permanent neural traces (templates or engrams). Ideas and images derive from these

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[215] Dalton, p. 8
[216] Fanger, p. 220
[217] O'Flaherty, p. 222

> traces. They provide the neurophysiological substrate of memory, thought, imagination, and fantasy. …
>
> …an integrating and organizing influence on memory traces is undoubtedly exercised by the constant flow of information, both new and stored, that continually affects the patterns whereby sensory engrams are woven into images, fantasies, dreams, hallucinations, and also emotions associated with these patterns. Thus we would expect that cultural factors and psychodynamic factors would be of major importance in determining the actual content and emotional meaning of hallucinations…[218]

Therefore, in examining any dreams in fiction, attention must be paid to everything that has befallen the character, be it on a plane of consciousness or unconsciousness. The 'continuity hypothesis' holds fast here, as the two mingle and merge and become manifest in the confused or cryptic forms of subconscious dream imagery.

Three principal categories have been devised to outline the basic function of *сны* in Dostoevskii's texts: dreams resulting from anxiety that act as a warning to the dreamer; dreams that induce catharsis in the dreamer or result in peripeteia in their life or in the text; and, to the most intensely psychological extent, dreams of a mythical 'Golden Age' that yield insights into universal human psychology. Such categorisation is of course an imprecise task and individual dreams can fall into more than one category, but almost all have leanings toward one of these specific types.

DREAMS OF ANXIETY AND WARNING

Fear and anxiety are common emotions in Dostoevskii's works, often manifesting themselves in *сны* that have a range of causes: be it fear of society or entrapment, fears for loved ones, irrational, primal fears or a tormenting guilt.

These dreams more often than not also present the dreamer with a warning – either of the possible outcome of the dreamer's current situation, plans or state of mind, or of a more immediate threat. In this sense these dreams, which are sometimes extraordinarily vivid, are acutely intuitive but not quite premonitory – it is down to the dreamer whether he or she acts on or heeds the dream's message. Unfortunately for them, Dostoevskii's dreamers rarely do.

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[218] Louis Jolyon West, 'A Clinical and Theoretical Overview of Hallucinatory Phenomena', in Siegel and West, pp. 299-300

Raskol'nikov

Of all the dreams to be found in Dostoevskii's works, perhaps the most famous, and certainly the most dissected by critics, is Raskol'nikov's 'болезненный' *сон* of the beaten mare in *Преступление и наказание*. It has been extensively analysed for a good reason, as its brutally vivid events form one of the strongest, most memorable passages the author ever wrote.

Dostoevskii himself highlights the significance of the dream by deliberately framing it within the text, leaving the reader in no doubt that we are entering Raskol'nikov's subconscious. One method of framing he uses is a shift into the present tense, which gives the dream a directness and immediacy. More obviously, the passage is prefaced by a paragraph in which Dostoevskii effectively takes over the narration. He comments on the incredible lucidity of dreams such as Raskol'nikov's, and in doing so prepares the reader for what is about to come.

Even the vivid setting of the dream, familiar from Raskol'nikov's childhood, seems more detailed than he remembers it, 'даже в памяти его она [местность] гораздо более изгладилась, чем представлялась теперь во сне' (6:46). Robert Jackson attaches great importance to the setting, which he says displays the 'underlying philosophical pro and contra' of Russian life which consequently displays, even at this very early stage of the novel, 'the seed of Raskolnikov's own moral and spiritual renewal'[219]. For the young Raskol'nikov and his father are on their way to the church which he holds dear, the cemetery of which contains the tombs of his grandmother and brother, 'with their clear promise of resurrection'. But to attain these spiritual balms they must pass by the tavern, full of drunken peasants. 'On the deepest level of the dream, then, we may speak of the coexistence… of two barely contiguous worlds: the ideal world of Christianity, with its aesthetic-religious ideals, and the real world claimed by the devil.'[220] In the reality of the text, as Tatiana Kasatkina shows, these two poles are fused: 'В «действительности» романа… кабак и церковь оказываются не противостоящими друг другу, а одним, пространство церкви на наших глазах преобразуется в пространство кабака (в «Эпилоге», когда в

[219] Jackson, *The Art of Dostoevsky*, p. 198
[220] Ibid.

церкви каторжные бросятся на Раскольникова), а кабак становится церковью.'[221] The dream, then, also charts Raskol'nikov's progression through the entire novel, 'through a secular world toward spiritual salvation'[222].

Such vivid dreams seem to have a life of their own, acting like a parasite or a possessing spirit towards the host organism, the dreamer, who has little control over events. 'It is not surprising that at this moment, on the threshold of crime, Raskolnikov's soul is "in confusion and darkness",' writes Jackson.[223] Dostoevskii dares to hope that his literary portrayal of such a dream can have a similarly powerful effect on the reader – and while a textual account would never have the same immediacy as the dream experienced first-hand, the dream of the beaten mare is undoubtedly gripping in its graphic horror. It is all the more awful for Raskol'nikov who, while not establishing its layered meanings consciously, obviously harbours dark portents of what his subconscious is presenting to him. 'Whereas the detail, length, and unrelieved sadism of the action make the dream terrible,' writes Nathalie Brown, 'the internal conflicts of the dreamer make it terrifying'.[224]

It is a dream of warning that reveals great anxiety. Despite its apparently cathartic effect – Raskol'nikov renounces his theory of killing the pawnbroker on awakening – it proves to be merely a palliative instead of a cure for his rationalistic disease. The reason for this can be found in the dream itself. For Raskol'nikov is not only represented in the dream by his child self, who watches the mare being beaten to death outside the tavern; he is also embodied by the peasant Mikolka, whose repeated claim to ownership of the horse he kills – 'Мое добро! Что хочу, то и делаю' (6:48) – is analogous to Raskol'nikov's will to power, his belief in his right to kill the pawnbroker.

Such an identification warns of the extreme brutality of Raskol'nikov's rationally planned deed and the ensuing mental derangement that is likely to result. Mikolka, in his merciless beating of the mare, becomes increasingly frenzied and yet simultaneously detached from his actions as his blows become almost mechanical.

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[221] Касаткина, p. 91
[222] Katz, p. 95
[223] Jackson, *The Art of Dostoevsky*, p. 200
[224] Nathalie Babel Brown, *Hugo & Dostoevsky*, Ardis, Ann Arbor, 1978, p. 97

Raskol'nikov, too, experiences this detachment during the double murder scene, due to its intensity; 'the rage is laid bare, stripped of its intellectual justifications.'[225] In particular, the murder of the pawnbroker's sister Lizaveta, entirely unplanned, is a panicked, almost instinctual reaction to her sudden appearance in the pawnbroker's apartment. Raskol'nikov's separation from reality, rather than abating after the deed, only widens further through the remainder of the novel, representing his increasing alienation from the rest of humanity that has resulted from his *преступление* – his 'vision' on the Neva, we have seen, shows this.

As well as presaging the brutality of Raskol'nikov's crime, the dream also predicts its futility, needlessness and inhumanity. 'Mikolka, warm-blooded, violent, is the opposite of Raskolnikov, the cold theorist; but the act of murder is the same,' writes Ruth Mortimer. 'Had he examined his theory further, he would have seen that the old woman, once murdered, would be as useless to him as the dead mare to Mikolka'[226].

However, Raskol'nikov's principal embodiment in the dream as his child self offers him a sense of hope and reveals to the reader his subconscious moral values. For despite the symbolic destruction of innocence that occurs in the slaying of the horse, Raskol'nikov's instincts are to protect the mare from harm, to shield another being's innocence from the harsh world. Similarly, in the wider scope of *Преступление и наказание* as a whole, Raskol'nikov's innocence will be lost – he will kill – yet he instinctively tries to protect his innocent family and friends from the consequences of his actions.

Including the beaten horse itself as another facet of Raskol'nikov stretches the identification further; here we find that, as Viacheslav Ivanov contends, Raskol'nikov, like the mare, 'присужден – или сам себя присудил – к осуществлению того, что по воле всех должно было совершиться.'[227] He has become a martyr for his own rationalist cause. Similarly, Philip Rahv deduces that

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[225] Breger, p. 31

[226] Ruth Mortimer, 'Dostoevski and the Dream,' in *Modern Philology*, vol. 54 (1956-1957), University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 106-16

[227] Вячеслав Иванов, 'Достоевский, трагедия – миф – мистика', in *Собрание сочинений*, vol. 4, Брюссель, 1987, p. 537

'in killing the pawnbroker he would be killing himself too'[228], a fact that Raskol'nikov comes to recognise during his confession to Sonia: 'Разве я старушонку убил? Я себя убил, а не старушонку! Тут так-таки разом и ухлопал себя навеки!' (6:322) The horse, adds Ivanov, also symbolises the downtrodden and browbeaten inhabitants of Dostoevskii's universe – such as Sonia and her family, the needlessly killed Elizaveta, even Raskol'nikov's own mother and sister – who are overburdened with the pressures of basic survival, much as the mare's cart is overburdened with people. If they cannot bear the burden, they are destroyed under its weight.

In addition, the many witnesses to the horse's death all become complicit in the deed – either directly by beating, or indirectly by weighing the wagon down or simply failing to prevent the brutal act. Here we see one of the first symbolic, subconscious portrayals of Dostoevskii's ethos that 'все за всех виноваты' (15:31). Dostoevskii's other great message, that of the value of childhood innocence, also finds weight in the young Raskol'nikov, the only witness to the beating who tries to stop it and therefore remains free from guilt. 'In Raskolnikov's nightmare,' writes Jackson, 'only the pure vision of a child, only the sacred indignation of an unsullied soul, holds out any hope to the world that is all but damned.'[229]

But Jackson, in an earlier essay, also points to the possible problems inherent in an innocence that demands universal happiness, and cannot grasp the presence of evil in reality:

> the child, though rightfully protesting cruelty and evil, is unable conceptually to integrate evil in his prefall universe. This is essentially the problem, as Dostoevsky conceives it, of such types as Raskolnikov and Ivan [Karamazov]: idealists, humanists, they are unable, at root, to disencumber themselves of their utopian dreams, their insistence on the moral absolute.[230]

Idealism and humanism are the result of what happens when such innocence refuses to yield to worldly experience, in however harsh a form. And, as both Raskol'nikov

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[228] Philip Rahv, 'Dostoevsky in *Crime and Punishment*', in Rene Wellek (ed.), *Dostoevsky – A Collection of Critical Essays*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 1962, p. 18
[229] Jackson, *The Art of Dostoevsky*, p. 202
[230] Robert Louis Jackson, ' Philosophical Pro and Contra in Part One of *Crime and Punishment*', in Robert Louis Jackson (ed.), *Twentieth Century Interpretations of* Crime and Punishment – *A Collection of Critical Essays*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 1974, p. 36

and particularly Ivan Karamazov show, real psychological damage can occur when the 'moral absolute' is always demanded.

Raskol'nikov's second prominent *сон* in *Преступление и наказание*, in which he relives his murder of the pawnbroker, is a masterful subconscious expression of the murderer's guilt. It displays a very different technique from the dream of the beaten mare: where that was definitively framed by the reality of the text, here dream and reality seamlessly merge into a decidedly disturbing whole. The effect is unsettling, and the surreal atmosphere is even more sinister than the graphic 'fantastic realism' of Raskol'nikov's first dream. The deed is now done, the murder committed. Instead of an incredible, horrific notion of *what could be* – as the 'картина' of the beaten mare suggests – the scenes leading to the attempted re-murder of the pawnbroker show *what now is*: the evil that Raskol'nikov's subconscious is trying to process. This has already manifested itself in his extended bouts of confused delirium and depressive dreamlike states. But here, the horror is chillingly lifelike.

Raskol'nikov's descent into his subconscious begins a considerable while before the onset of the dream, as delirium takes hold of him and he starts slipping into his disordered subconscious. Images take form randomly: 'Так, были какие-то мысли или обрывки мыслей, какие-то представления, без порядка и связи' (6:210). Razumikhin and Nastas'ia enter to check on his condition, before Raskol'nikov loses all touch with reality: 'Минутами он чувствовал, что как бы бредит: он впадал в лихорадочно-восторженное настроение.' (6:211) Then: 'Он забылся; странным показалось ему, что он не помнит, как мог он очутиться на улице.' (6:212) The *сон* has begun – but different modes of narration are woven throughout, as if the uncertainty between dream and reality continues. There is a 'combination of consciousnesses' between Raskol'nikov and the novel's narrator, writes J. Shaw, and this results in 'a paradoxical combination of immediacy and artistic distance'[231]. This immediacy is present in the graphic depiction of Raskol'nikov's attempt to murder the pawnbroker once more; while 'artistic distance' is maintained through a consistent streak of surrealism and bold symbolism.

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[231] Shaw, 'Raskol'nikov's Dreams', pp. 137-38

Raskol'nikov's guilt is symbolised in various ways in the dream. The first to be portrayed is the dense, almost palpable atmosphere: 'Сумерки сгущались […] особенно душно было в воздухе […] пахло известью, пылью, стоячею водой.' (6:212) The effect, combined with the awful stillness of the whole dream, is stifling, mirroring the rising suffocation of Raskol'nikov's guilt in his increasingly untenable position which must naturally lead to either suicide or confession.[232]

This atmosphere is intensified by a number of accusing witnesses to his deed in the dream. The first is the moon, the quiet gaze of which lends further suffocating weight to the whole passage. 'Это от месяца такая тишина […] он, верно, теперь загадку загадывает,' Raskol'nikov thinks. '…чем тише был месяц, тем сильнее стукало его сердце' (6:213). By the time he makes his way back into the pawnbroker's apartment, it is apparent that the moon's gaze is inescapable; it is an omnipresent witness to his crime, and even though it cannot speak, it relays its knowledge of Raskol'nikov's guilt when it becomes stained red. Jacques Catteau, who has commented extensively on colour symbolism in Dostoevskii, notes that, in both this dream and that of the beaten mare, red is the overwhelming, dominant colour. It bespeaks the blood that 'cries out' ('кричит') inside Raskol'nikov, as Nastas'ia says earlier in the text. The blood of the beaten mare stains that dream; but in the dream that revisits the murder, in particular, 'the original scenery gradually turns red with blood, as if a red disc had been inserted in a projector'[233]. Here the moon is that projector, the only source of light in the dream, which changes from yellow to red, suffusing the whole scene in the apartment with a demonic, murderous hue.

The motif of the staircase, which Raskol'nikov ascends to the pawnbroker's apartment, has also been shown to be important – T. Szabó, we recall, refers to it as a 'типичное средство перехода в потусторонний мир'[234], a world of subconscious

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[232] Antony Johae has pointed out how this 'respiratory constriction' may also reveal a lung complaint in the dreamer. This, in turn, may echo Dostoevskii's own encroaching, ultimately fatal, emphysema. Joahe adds that 'sufferers of lung diseases frequently dream of being suffocated, of being trapped in a crowd and fleeing', and this is certainly evident in the dream's end, when Raskol'nikov tries to fight his way through an onlooking crowd. ('Expressive symbols in Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*', p. 18)
[233] Catteau, p. 406
[234] Сабо, 'Волшебная сказка и повесть Достоевского «Хозяйка»

confusion, while Bakhtin sees it as an extension of the public square.[235] A crowd gathers there to observe Raskol'nikov's actions in his dream, as if to witness the murder and judge him accordingly. Their almost unbearable silence again speaks volumes in the oppressive atmosphere of the dream: 'Он бросился бежать, но вся прихожая уже полна людей, двери на лестнице отворены настежь, и на площадке, на лестнице и туда вниз – всё люди, голова с головой, все смотрят, – но все притаились и ждут, молчат…' (6:213)

Johae, paraphrasing Freud, presents a simpler interpretation of the staircase symbol as a means of social climbing.[236] Raskol'nikov, in ascending in both dream and reality, is attempting to put his ambition of becoming a great man, a Napoleon, into effect; he is attempting to ascend the social scale. And whereas he seems to succeed in reality, his inability to repeat the murder in his dream reveals his ambition's failure in reality, as well as on the social and psychological plane.

Although no one yet knows of his crime at this point – despite Porfirii Petrovich's suspicions – the crowd, along with the moon, signifies that Raskol'nikov is subconsciously aware he is guilty before all. This guilt then consumes his subconscious and makes him incapable of further effective action, it paralyses the pursuit of his 'grand idea' of taking a life to become a 'Napoleon'. Try as he might, he cannot kill the old pawnbroker in his dream. She has become an indelible mark on his psyche – 'a ghost which he can never kill … at once the personification and the symbol of his guilt'[237] – and her quiet laughter, along with that from the next room, mocks his impotence to pursue his theory: 'с каждым ударом топора смех и шепот из спальни раздавались всё сильнее и слышнее, а старушонка так вся и колыхалась от хохота.' (6:213) It is as if every blow to her head is a further blow to his theory's credibility. And while the awful silence of the dream may be broken, it does nothing to relieve Raskol'nikov's tension. Behind the mocking laughter of the pawnbroker can be heard the quiet laughs and whispers of the public's judgemental rumours and scandalous gossip over his actions. It is classic Dostoevskian

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[235] Бахтин, p. 290
[236] Johae, 'Expressive symbols in Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*', pp. 17-18
[237] Mortimer, 'Dostoevski and the Dream', p. 113

'carnivalesque' – 'типичное карнавальное сочетание', according to Bakhtin[238] – grimly ridiculous in the very notion that such a horrifying event should have such onlookers. The crowd also has an antecedent in Ordynov's dream of 'таинственные, подозрительные люди' whispering in the dark corners of his room in 'Хозяйка'.

The ultimate effect is to highlight the horror of Raskol'nikov's actions and their consequences: the dream is an active reminder of his awful guilt, and a subconscious preventative to Raskol'nikov's attempts to bury his deed in the justification of his theory. And, like the needless death of the mare, this dream displays the futility of that theory – and its failure: 'He had murdered her in the flesh but not in his spirit, and she continues to haunt his conscience,' writes Joseph Frank. 'He had failed to become one of the "great men" who had gone beyond good and evil altogether.'[239] In Bakhtin's terminology, 'перед нами образ развенчивающего всенародного осмеяния на площади [i.e., the crowd in the stairwell] карнавального короля-самозванца.'[240] The man who would be king, or emperor Napoleon, is overthrown by his own guilty conscience: 'The great door opening on the staircase or the entrance hall is the conscience of the hero offered to the gaze of judgement'[241]. Raskol'nikov, on Sonia's advice, will later admit his guilt before all when he bows to the earth and kisses it on St Petersburg's Haymarket – the literal public square.

Raskol'nikov, therefore, is no king, emperor, or 'superman'. Brown rightfully asks:

> What kind of 'superman' is he, if he cannot live with the image of himself as a killer of old ladies, if the whole world laughs at him, if even his victim laughs at him? … His dream does not solve his problems but only compounds his anguish and fear at not having become what he willed to be.[242]

This is underlined on Raskol'nikov's awakening, when he finds Svidrigailov looking at him from his doorway, as if having stepped out of his dream. '…он порожден кошмаром героя, выходит из его сна', according to Konstantin Mochul'skii[243] – because, in fact, Svidrigailov is the embodiment of the 'Napoleon' Raskol'nikov

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[238] Бахтин, p. 290
[239] Frank, *The Miraculous Years*, p. 128
[240] Бахтин, p. 290
[241] Catteau, p. 440
[242] Brown, p. 142
[243] Мочульский, p. 251

aims to be. According to Frank, 'Svidrigailov mirrors the elemental thrust of that egoism which, concentrated in Raskolnikov's monomania, had ultimately led to the murders; and he now confronts Raskolnikov as someone who has *accepted* the thoroughgoing egoistic amorality which… he [Raskol'nikov] had unwittingly been striving to incarnate himself.'[244] Louis Breger adds:

> Raskolnikov aspires to be a Bronze Man, a Napoleon whose actions are not constrained by the fears and weaknesses of those made of flesh and blood; Svidrigailov is meant to be such a creature. He is not so much immoral as he is amoral, he has no conscience, feels no guilt, all acts are of equal value – or lack of value – to him.[245]

Instead of murdering, Svidrigailov beats his wife and seduces underage girls – both of which, it seems, have resulted in death. Svidrigailov affirms their similarities as one of Dostoevskii's paired doubles when he says: 'мы одного поля ягоды' (6:221). But whereas Raskol'nikov's subconscious shows he has failed to fulfil his transgression, Svidrigailov seems unaffected by his own actions.[246]

Dostoevskii times the introduction of Svidrigailov perfectly to underline the failure of Raskol'nikov's theory: firstly in the dream, and then by juxtaposing Raskol'nikov with such a degraded sensualist. Significantly, it is only upon hearing of Svidrigailov's death that Raskol'nikov decisively chooses to confess. Suicide is the dead end of Svidrigailov's path in life, the one down which Raskol'nikov has just turned; in fact, at around the same time as Svidrigailov shoots himself, Raskol'nikov is himself contemplating throwing himself into the Neva.

Raskol'nikov, as his subconscious reveals, is inherently unlike Svidrigailov: he tries to stop the killing of the mare and cannot kill the pawnbroker a second time. He may have transgressed once, but it tears him apart with guilt. His conscience, manifest in his subconscious, would never let him stoop completely to Svidrigailov's level.

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[244] Frank, *The Miraculous Years*, p. 129
[245] Breger, p. 43
[246] Until, that is, the *кошмар*-filled night before his suicide, of which more later.

Vel'chaninov

Other prominent, extended examples of anxiety dreams of guilt are Vel'chaninov's two similar dreams in *Вечный муж*, in which he confronts a man against whom he has committed a crime – evidently referring to his cuckolding of his old friend Trusotskii.

The presence of a large crowd witnessing the dreams' events echoes Raskol'nikov's second *сон*, but in this case they are less passive; their judgement of the 'criminal' is now voiced openly: 'Дело шло об каком-то преступлении, которое он будто бы совершил и утаил и в котором обвиняли его в один голос беспрерывно входившие к нему откудова-то люди. Толпа собралась ужасная, но люди всё еще не переставали входить, так что и дверь уже не затворялась, а стояла настежь.' (9:15) Before such an accusing crowd, Vel'chaninov cannot cover up his deed. He senses that his fate lies in the hands of this man, a reference to his fear of his deed being found out. So instead of repenting, he tries once again to cover up his guilt by lashing out at its cause, as if to obliterate it: 'в каком-то опьянении от ярости и от страху, дошедшем до помешательства, но заключавшем тоже в себе бесконечное наслаждение, он уже не считал своих ударов, но бил не останавливаясь. Он хотел всё, всё *это* разрушить.' (9:15-16)

Here again we see a parallel to the frenzied blows of Mikolka, the symbol of subconscious evil, but also to the futile swings of the axe in Raskol'nikov's dream of murdering the pawnbroker a second time. Both Raskol'nikov and Vel'chaninov attempt to eradicate their guilt with violence, but cannot. Both are subconsciously afraid of their guilt, as if it sits and festers in their psyche, waiting to strike in such dreams. Vel'chaninov only takes pleasure in the dream's violence because he sees a chance to destroy his guilt. But the dream never reaches a conclusion (again, suggesting the guilt is indelible), perhaps mercifully for Vel'chaninov, for if he had 'destroyed' this man, this symbol of his guilt, his guilt would simply be compounded – leaving him at the mercy of the increasingly threatening crowd.

Instead, his guilt becomes manifest: the doorbell awakes Vel'chaninov, and Trusotskii appears on his doorstep. As with Svidrigailov's first appearance, dream content seems to pass into conscious reality. Bem has stated that the whole of

Вечный муж is, like 'Хозяйка', an extended dream episode and/or hallucination, brought on by the protagonist's illness: 'драматизация содержания сна'[247]. But, as previously argued with regard to *Двойник*, the absence of any established objective reality in the text is problematic when discussing the impact of subconscious imagery on character. In addition, Trusotskii seems as real a character as Svidrigailov, who occupies entire scenes on his own and with Dunia, and even has his own dreams. So by the time Dostoevskii began writing *Вечный муж*, he surely realised the possibilities inherent in having a character echo subconscious themes, without having the entire action of the text take place on a subconscious plane.

Also, the 'doubling' of Trusotskii and Vel'chaninov shows more characterological subtlety than that of, say, Raskol'nikov and Svidrigailov. As Frank asserts, this variation on the double is based in the very history of Vel'chaninov's subconscious guilt, his affair with Trusotskii's wife. They are 'torn between love (or at least tolerance and sympathy) for each other and hatred; each feels a need to punish the other as well as himself; both are victims of the same female deity who had manipulated their lives'.[248] Vel'chaninov keeps himself behind the walls he has built up within himself as protection from his guilt. He refuses to sympathise with Trusotskii's predicament as doing so would allow this guilt, embodied in Trusotskii himself, the man he lashes out at in his dream, to triumph. Despite their common characteristics, he keeps Trusotskii at an arm's length, insisting they are 'люди разных миров… и между нами одна могила легла' (9:88), referring to the death of Liza, his daughter by Trusotskii's wife.

This choice of words comes back to haunt Vel'chaninov in the recurring dream towards the story's end. In reality, Vel'chaninov has ignored the warning of his first dream and compounded his guilt by humiliating Trusotskii and conspiring against him with the latter's reluctant new fiancée. In the second dream the crowd appears even more threatening, but they suddenly make way for a new mob: 'что-то с собой несли, что-то большое и тяжелое', potentially a coffin. 'Все глаза засверкали и устремились на Вельчанинова; все, грозя и торжествуя, указывали ему на

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[247] А. Л. Бем, 'Развертывание сна («Вечный муж» Достоевского)', in *Достоевский – Психоаналитические этюды*, p. 59
[248] Frank, *The Miraculous Years*, p. 386

лестницу.' (9:98) But in this instance the threat to Vel'chaninov's life is real, as he wakes up to find Trusotskii about to attack him with a razor. Vel'chaninov's fear of his guilt, manifest in his dreams, seems justified – for the cause of this guilt almost kills him.

This is, then, a warning dream *par excellence*, as the subconscious threat is mirrored, or carried over, into reality. If the 'big and heavy' object is taken to be a coffin, Vel'chaninov may already have a strong sense of subconscious warning of the imminent physical threat to himself. The sound of the doorbell in the dream then acts like an alarm, having featured in his first dream of Trusotskii, and being a reminder of their first meeting since their estrangement. Vel'chaninov then experiences curious presentiment, perhaps instinct, as he half awakens from his dream: 'Какая мысль направила его первое движение и была ли у него в то мгновение хоть какая-нибудь мысль, – но как будто кто-то подсказал ему, что надо делать: он схватился с постели, бросился с простертыми вперед руками, как бы обороняясь и останавливая нападение' (9:98). He deflects Trusotskii's potentially lethal attack, but only due to some heavily loaded warnings in his dream.

Dostoevskii evidently intended these dreams to be the focal points of *Вечный муж* from his first conceptions of the novella. In his notes we find an early, first-person perspective account of a physical confrontation between the narrator Vel'chaninov and Trusotskii: 'Я воротился поздно, он уж спит. Я лег, заснул, сон, вскочил, бросился на него, связал.' (9:292) Again, the subconscious was deemed to be the best plane in which to dramatise his characters' deepest and strongest impulses, and then dredge them up into reality.

Ippolit

Dostoevskii's other prominent anxiety dreams focus on irrational fear, and frequently feature powerful symbols of this fear. The most detailed example is Ippolit's horrifying dream, related in his 'Необходимое объяснение', of 'ужасное животное, какое-то чудовище' (8:323) with which he is trapped in his room. While containing much for the psychoanalyst to dissect – for example, dreams of reptiles as

a sign of great personal anxiety[249] – the dream can essentially be taken to symbolise Ippolit's failure to grasp the concept of brute nature.

> This supernatural image reduces an abstract discussion of nature's laws to the scale of an unavoidable personal confrontation. The monster is a mindless manifestation of something beyond human ken. Its ingestion of life is an essential fact from which Ippolit cannot hide and against which he is powerless to fight.[250]

It has therefore become a terrifying, evil monster for him, and a threat to him – the 'ядовитый' 'гад' tries to sting him, just as nature has stung him with chronic disease. Ippolit's description of its shape gives it demonic connotations: 'всё животное представляется, если смотреть сверху, в виде трезубца' (8:323). It is a threatening creature acting on instinctual impulse, symbolising nature devoid of God. There is also, Ippolit feels, 'какая-то тайна' (8:323) in the creature and its appearance in his dream, as if it conveys a primal, mythic quality of evil. His dog Norma senses this too, and attempts to kill it – something that Ippolit, with his rational fear of the irrational, cannot do. Norma does not quite seem to succeed – the 'гад' is bitten in two but does not definitely die – and she is stung, her impending death echoing Ippolit's.

As happens so often in Dostoevskii's works, dreams come to an end with the arrival of a character – not often without symbolic significance – in the reality of the text. Here, Ippolit's dream is dispelled by the arrival of Myshkin, the perceived force of 'good' in *Идиот*, who symbolically banishes the evil of the dream: '[Ippolit's] fantasy of a world pitiless and brutish is a direct contradiction of Myshkin's own "infinite pity",' writes Dennis Slattery.[251] But Myshkin is not always at hand to dispel such dreams; despite his Christian attributes, he is not an omnipresent Christ. The absence of God from Ippolit's dream of evil is later corroborated by his hallucinations of the 'огромного и отвратительного тарантула', 'темное, глухое и всесильное существо' (8:340); but here it is Rogozhin who 'appears' in his room. Rogozhin, the *тарантул* and the horrifying *гад* are symbols of primal evil in

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[249] Dalton, going further, believes the dream recalls the 'primal scene' of the child for the first time witnessing the sexual act between mother and father (pp. 154-56).
[250] Roger B. Anderson, *Dostoevsky – Myths of Duality*, University of Florida, Gainesville, 1986, p. 86
[251] Dennis Patrick Slattery, *The Idiot, Dostoevsky's Fantastic Prince – A Phenomenological Approach*, Peter Lang, New York, 1983, p. 152

Идиот. Instead of dispelling the hallucination as Myshkin dispels the dream, the hallucination of Rogozhin instead strengthens its sense of terror by humanising its image.

Ippolit cannot accept that life has handed him such a hard lot as to afflict him with chronic tuberculosis, and then these tormenting, mocking visions of nature's supremacy. 'He wants to know who has sent the scorpion to him,' Roger Anderson writes, 'just as he demands to know why nature has granted him so much potential in life, only literally to "consume" him through tuberculosis.'[252] When his only answers are either the oblivious reality of 'Мейеровая стена', which he stares at blankly from his apartment, or subconscious terror, he decides suicide is his only option. 'Нельзя оставаться в жизни, которая принимает такие странные, обижающие меня формы,' Ippolit says. 'Это привидение меня унизило. Я не в силах подчиняться темной силе, принимающей вид тарантула.' (8:341) His intended suicide is an act of rebellion against nature. 'For Ippolit, the world mocks man; humanity is placed within nature only to be quickly destroyed by it. … He decides, therefore, that his own life in such a world must be short and based on his own decision. He chooses suicide at sunrise.'[253] Ippolit's subconscious images of fear are an extension of Ivan Petrovich's feelings of *мистический ужас* in *Униженные и оскорбленные*. But in *Идиот*, existential fear is given shape and form in the threatening, demonic creature. It could be argued that Ippolit's subconscious manifestation of death is more vivid because he is closer to death than Ivan.

Raskol'nikov

Subconscious manifestations of anxiety and warning come together on the largest scale imaginable in Raskol'nikov's final, apocalyptic dream which he experiences during delirium in prison hospital during the epilogue of *Преступление и наказание*. While portraying the ultimate horror of Raskol'nikov's theory that was symbolised so graphically in his previous two dreams, its tone is epic and much more impersonal, 'experientially much less vivid' than his other dreams, 'presented

[252] Anderson, p. 86
[253] Slattery, pp. 152-53

thematically'[254]. Yet, despite its cast of millions, it carries a warning very personal to Raskol'nikov. It depicts the ultimate outcome of his grand idea to become a 'Napoleon' by viewing this idea as a virus which infects mankind. This disease of self-righteousness leads to global anarchy and ultimately death and near-extinction of humanity: for 'everybody kills his moneylender, his Lizaveta, his mother, in the name of this idea.'[255] Leslie Johnson, taking the idea of Raskol'nikov as a self-conceived God figure, concludes: 'The way of messianic crime, this dream reveals, leads not to the New Jerusalem, but to universal death'[256]. But not quite universal. The 'чистые и избранные' (6:420) are left to repopulate the world, presumably a reference to the meek – such as Sonia – inheriting the earth. She (and to a lesser degree Dunia) has already proven she can cope with chaos in life: 'she has been thrown into the midst of corruption, but remains untouched.'[257]

However, Frank takes a far grimmer view of the dream's conclusion, one that Dostoevskii perhaps did not intend: that the 'чистые и избранные' are referred to in the language of Raskol'nikov's theory, and consequently it is only the truest adherents to that theory that survive the apocalypse: 'The myth of a new elite race thus emerges again, on the ruins of a world demolished by the spread of the very same belief in "extraordinary people".'[258] In such a potential world, populated by the most brutal cadre of egoists, humanity is reconfigured as a machine – for emotion is weakness among this 'elite race' – and the killing is almost certainly set to continue. A 'palpably vicious circle'[259] begins, in which the loser is always humanity as we know it.

Raskol'nikov, despite his arrest and imprisonment, has up to this point retained a stubborn pride in his ideals; this dream shows the folly of his ideas and leads him to realise this at the novel's end. 'Here we see Dostoevsky destroying the last shreds of Raskolnikov's stubborn conviction that a supreme egoism could be combined with

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[254] Shaw, 'Raskol'nikov's Dreams', p. 140
[255] Yury F. Karyakin, 'Toward Regeneration', in Jackson (ed.), *Twentieth Century Interpretations of* Crime and Punishment, p. 101
[256] Johnson, pp. 131-32
[257] James M. Holquist, 'Disease as Dialectic in *Crime and Punishment*', in Jackson (ed.), *Twentieth Century Interpretations of* Crime and Punishment, p. 115
[258] Frank, *The Miraculous Years*, p. 145
[259] Rice, p. 107

socially benevolent consequences. On the contrary, the universal reign of such an egoism would lead to the collapse of society altogether… the war of all against all.'[260] But still Raskol'nikov does not repent of his theory. It is not until he is afforded a glimpse of eternity as he gazes out over the Siberian steppe that he falls at Sonia's feet in true repentance.

Raskol'nikov's dreams may sequentially 'chart his progression toward love and faith'[261] but it is not until after his final dream, right at the novel's end, that he finally visualises these goals. For, despite their overriding messages, Raskol'nikov remains evasive of his own subconscious warnings (rendered as 'unconsciously' by Mortimer in the following quote):

> There is a constant attempt to shift responsibility, as though he believed himself incapable of such imaginings. Unconsciously, however, he is grasping seemingly isolated threads in these dreams: the sympathy of the child in the dream of the beaten horse, the awareness of the 'crowd' in the second dream, the projected mockery of his efforts in the murder dream, the treachery of free will in the dream of the plague. Touching him at first indirectly, these images approach conscious realization[262].

It is the final dream that rams the message home to Raskol'nikov's conscious life. In its focus on Raskol'nikov's idea, it can be viewed as a continuation of Ordynov's second dream during the deepest point of his delirium. Both point to the danger of living in the world of *мечты* and abiding by them in reality. Not all theories work in practice; and anthropological experiments such as Raskol'nikov's tend to neglect the power of the human heart and soul in favour of the brain. Luckily for Raskol'nikov, his subconscious offers him pointed portrayals of the horror of his *мечта*, which he finally heeds: 'the disparity between the hero's experiential dreams and his figurative dream is the motivating force that finally leads to the renunciation of his theory and the transformation of his spirit.'[263]

Perversely, Dostoevskii's notebooks reveal that Raskol'nikov was to be one of the first witnesses to and bearer of the vision of the 'Golden Age', and that his deeds have a basis in this aim of universal happiness:

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[260] Frank, *The Miraculous Years*, pp. 145-46
[261] Katz, pp. 104-05
[262] Mortimer, 'Dostoevski and the Dream', p. 114
[263] Katz, p. 105

> NB. «О, зачем не все в счастьи?» Картина золотого века. Она уже носится в умах и в сердцах. Как ей не настать – и проч.
>
> NB. «Но какое право имею я, я, подлый убийца, желать счастья людям и мечтать о золотом веке!
>
> Я хочу иметь это право».
>
> И вследствие того (этой главы) он идет и на себя доказывает. (7:91)

The desire to be part of this 'золотой век' is given as Raskol'nikov's major reason for confession; he wants to return to humanity, from which his murder has isolated him, to share in its striving towards this happiness. Dostoevskii was to leave the subconscious expression and utilisation of the Golden Age until later works; but in Raskol'nikov's final dream we see its very antithesis. It is the ultimate condemnation of his will to power. Like both Ordynov's dream and that of the Golden Age, it plumbs subconscious depths to access an almost mythical message. In this case, it can even be boiled down to the simple Biblical command: Thou shalt not kill.

DREAMS OF CATHARSIS AND PERIPETEIA

These *сны* have an undeniably powerful effect on the character experiencing them. Upon waking, the dreamer often has a sense of resolution, as if some worrying problem has been solved by the dream, or a new direction in life is revealed to the dreamer. In turn, such dreams can mark a significant turning point in the text.

Raskol'nikov

Some of these dreams are themselves warnings: Raskol'nikov's dream of the beaten mare, for example, displays the rejuvenating, healing, cathartic power of dreams:

> Ему вдруг стало дышать как бы легче. Он почувствовал, что уже сбросил с себя это страшное бремя, давившее его так долго, и на душе его стало вдруг легко и мирно. […]
>
> […] Точно нарыв на сердце его, нарывавший весь месяц, вдруг прорвался. Свобода, свобода! Он свободен теперь от этих чар, от колдовства, обаяния, от наваждения! (6:50)

The dream temporarily 'cures' Raskol'nikov of his *мечта*. His body, on awakening, feels battered as if he himself has taken a beating, and he therefore instinctually sides with the victim at this moment. This subsequently leads him to realise the horror of his intended actions. It is a moment of clarity which, like the figure of the child

Raskol'nikov in the dream, shows us his true character, which has become distorted by his theory. In fact, we could say, as Michael Katz does, that the innocent child in Raskol'nikov is communicated subconsciously to his conscious state: 'His subconscious reveals both to the dreamer and to the reader the "real" Raskolnikov – the child who feels compassion for the victim as well as hostility for the victimizer, and who asks the penetrating question. Raskolnikov's "conscious" appears to heed this message from his "subconscious".'[264]

The fact that the dream does not succeed in averting his murder of the pawnbroker is due largely to fateful circumstances shortly after; and it is rather futile to debate whether, had Raskol'nikov not overheard the time when Alena Ivanovna would be alone in her flat, he would not have eventually killed her. In any case, the text does point to the fact that the dream does succeed – however temporarily – in curing Raskol'nikov's obsession with his 'grand idea'.

Svidrigailov

Svidrigailov's *сны* in the hotel towards the end of *Преступление и наказание* also lead to a resolution: his suicide. While the actual seed of this decision lies in Dunia's dignified rejection of him, his dreams offer him a fuller explanation of why there is no reason to carry on living.

They are presented in a series of different layers in which reality seems to be presented, but is then subordinated by another awakening. 'Dostoevsky maintains an illusion of concreteness and objectivity so that ultimately neither the reader nor Svidrigajlov can entirely extricate reality from illusion,' writes Johnson.[265] In this way, like Ordynov, Svidrigailov descends through different layers of his subconscious. The textual reality is set in the Hotel Adrianopol, but after Svidrigailov finds his room, reality begins to blur. Johnson notes how even the most concrete objects of 'reality' can be questioned in Dostoevskii's 'narrative conspiracy':

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[264] Ibid., p. 98
[265] Johnson, p. 101

> Reference is repeatedly made to the candle in Svidrigajlov's room. … This candle turns up at those moments when Svidrigajlov seems to have regained consciousness. It seems to ensure the end of the illusion. … Yet the candle also appears within Svidrigajlov's dreams, lighting the way into and within illusion. … If we assume that the whole night is one continuous nightmare, then everything in it, including the candle, can be subsumed to illusion. It is true that the candle is also mentioned at the outer boundaries of the nightmare, where it would seem to flank the illusion with an objective point of departure and return. Yet even these two references cannot be entirely rationalized. … It is impossible to specify … if the candle never was lit, or if it has simply gone out. Such indeterminacy throws the whole night into a netherworld between reality and illusion.[266]

Following his first dream of being covered in vermin – which foreshadows his death – Svidrigailov's *сны* in this subconscious state focus on his past wrongs. In picturing the idyllic country house containing the coffin of a girl who killed herself after being defiled, his subconscious reveals to him the true consequences of his paedophiliac tendencies: he has destroyed innocence. As he descends into another layer of dream ('Свидригайлов очнулся' (6:391), and he then stands at his open window for a few moments, but is in fact still asleep), his subconscious reveals to the reader his plan to kill himself: 'Выйду сейчас, пойду прямо на Петровский: там где-нибудь выберу большой куст, весь облитый дождем' (6:392). He then leaves his room in an attempt to check out, but: 'Он долго ходил по всему длинному и узкому коридору, не находя никого' (6:392). Svidrigailov seems lost in the 'corridors' of his own psyche, trapped in a nightmare. From the next encounter – what seems to be the deepest point of this subconscious episode – he realises that he is, in fact, trapped in the nightmare of his own life.

He happens upon a small girl in the corridor and takes her back to his room. At first he sees her as a poor, innocent and ill child – but then notices she is wearing make-up, and she starts to flirtatiously laugh at him: 'Что-то бесконечно безобразное и оскорбительное было в этом смехе, в этих глазах, во всей этой мерзости в лице ребенка.' (6:393) Svidrigailov cannot endure this picture of disfigured innocence and finally wakes up. But although he realises the whole passage of events has been a dream, his subconscious has revealed that he is still stuck in the nightmare of his

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[266] Ibid., pp. 101-02

inherently sensual nature. His subconscious, at its deepest level, forces him to take stock of his own life with the image of the girl: 'even though Svidrigajlov decides to expedite his suicide … he cannot leave until he beholds the ultimate revelation of his own self mirrored in the lewd smile of a five-year-old Camille.'[267]

It is fitting that, with the knowledge of Svidrigailov's fear of water – 'Никогда в жизнь мою не любил я воды, даже в пейзажах' (6:389) – his dreams and reality in their various intertwining layers[268] are literally drenched: not just his body with sweat, but with the incessant rain which causes the rising Neva to flood and leads to the 'молочный, густой туман' (6:394) he wakes up to in the morning. It is in this rising floodwater that the 'cellar rats' of his past 'swim out of his subconscious in various dreams.'[269] Svidrigailov's fear and disgust over his true nature – one that would, ultimately, sexually objectify a young child – has now become palpable in various forms of water, and it is everywhere, surrounding and suffocating him. The image of the child-whore presents itself as the horrifying, ultimate summation of Svidrigailov's subconscious desires. 'For the first time sensuality, his iconic attribute, his disease, as Raskolnikov has called it, occasions revulsion – from this depth of infection there can be no hope of cure or regeneration. Death is the logical consequence of so fatal a disease.'[270]

Upon awakening to the text's objective reality, Svidrigailov seems more calmly determined than ever to kill himself, and does so, surrounded by the fog of his fear. His dreams have confirmed his nature and its consequences, and he cannot live with what he has become. He is aware also that there is no chance for him to mend his ways. His vice is rooted firmly in his subconscious, from which he can never escape. This is made clear in his intention to marry a young girl, but also in the visitations he has from the 'ghosts' (most likely hallucinations) of the people he has wronged, including his late wife. These final dreams lead Svidrigailov to realise that there is no hope for him, and that he is a shadow of a human being living a degraded life. Frank writes: 'For him there is no natural innocence left in the world; everything he touches

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[267] Ibid., pp. 102-03
[268] For example, it is ambiguous whether the flood warning cannon sounds in reality, piercing his dream.
[269] Frank, *The Miraculous Years*, p. 140
[270] Holquist, 'Disease as Dialectic in *Crime and Punishment*', in Jackson (ed.), p. 114

turns into the corruption of unashamed vice. With this awareness of his living damnation, Svidrigailov shoots himself'[271].

Instead of going to America – where, despite the New World's ethos of a new life, he knows he will not change – he takes his own life. In fact, the very act of 'going to the New World' is suggestive of death, with hope of rebirth; and in a sense, Svidrigailov craves an end to his life so he can be reborn into any other guise but his own.

Alesha Karamazov

Братья Карамазовы contains more powerful dreams that provide a turning point in characters' lives. Indeed, the novel as a whole turns on such points of subconscious power. Father Zosima himself, who embodies the philosophical and theological basis of the entire narrative, believes in the healing, cathartic power of dreams. He says to a woman mourning for her young son: 'Вот он снится теперь тебе, и ты мучаешься, а тогда он тебе кроткие сны пошлет.' (14:47)

One of the most momentous dreams in Dostoevskii's fiction in terms of its effect on character is Alesha's vision of Christ's first miracle, in which the now-dead Zosima appears. Thrown into emotional turmoil by the rapid decay of his holy mentor's body, Alesha faces a strong challenge to his faith and is tempted by the wily Rakitin to visit the 'harlot' Grushen'ka. But he finds hope in the underlying goodness in Grushen'ka's heart, in her fable of the 'little onion' – '*всего-то* я луковку какую-нибудь во всю жизнь мою подала, всего только на мне и есть добродетели' (14:319) – which 'reveals the depths of unselfish love hidden in the human conscience'[272] (contrary to what his brother Ivan's Grand Inquisitor preached). Alesha returns to his monastic compound to seek consolidating solace in prayer by Zosima's body. In this almost meditative state, his praying soon becomes 'машинально' and he drifts into sleep. 'Обрывки мыслей мелькали в душе его, загорались, как звездочки, и тут же гасли, сменяясь другими, но зато царило в душе что-то целое, твердое, утоляющее, и он сознавал это сам.' (14:325) His thoughts slowly segue into dream imagery: 'Пока Ракитин будет думать о своих

[271] Frank, *The Miraculous Years*, p. 140
[272] Frank, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, p. 643

обидах, он будет всегда уходить в переулок… А дорога… дорога-то большая, прямая, светлая, хрустальная, и солнце в конце ее…' (14:326) Already at this point, the doubting Alesha, whose faith has been so rocked by the 'тлетворный дух' of Zosima's body, sees the road to salvation ahead of him, a road which he was in danger of straying from by following Rakitin into a 'переулок', to Grushen'ka's. The scene then changes to the wedding feast at Cana, the setting of the first miracle, of which Zosima is a witness. He turns to Alesha and explains: 'Я луковку подал, вот и я здесь' (14:327). This comment, which mirrors Grushen'ka's story, again strengthens Alesha's faith: the fact that all can be saved, that the sinful Grushen'ka is on a par with the saintly Zosima in Christ's eyes. Finally, Alesha is asked to look at Christ himself, described by Zosima as 'солнце наше' – the 'солнце' at the end of Alesha's 'большая, прямая, светлая, хрустальная дорога'. Alesha whispers 'не смею глядеть', and then: 'Что-то горело в сердце Алеши, что-то наполнило его вдруг до боли, слезы восторга рвались из души его… Он простер руки, вскрикнул и проснулся…' (14:327)

Renewed faith and decided purpose well up inside him and almost explode as they look for a release. The subconscious mode shows its ability to influence and alter character, for it is in this dream that Alesha discovers the power of belief. The dream-vision is portrayed as a direct message from the spirit of Father Zosima, and consequently the greater spirit of which he is now part:

> The hierophantic power of Dostoevsky's art here is crystallized as divinity itself is glimpsed, as in a dream, or in a memory that flashes in the mind and communicates to us some meaningful experience. For in a very deep sense Father Zossima is now part of the Spirit when something happens to man – to Alyosha. He pleads with his young disciple to make the beginning, to see Him, to believe in Him, to be reborn in Him.[273]

The powerful feelings of Alesha's dream then carry across into reality as he rushes out of the room into the clear night air, as if to seek the physical vastness of what he has just subconsciously experienced. Looking around, he accepts communion with nature, of which the Church is portrayed as very much a part: 'Полная восторгом душа его жаждала свободы, места, широты. Над ним широко, необозримо опрокинулся небесный купол, полный тихих сияющих звезд. …Свежая и тихая

[273] Panichas, p. 177

до неподвижности ночь облегла землю. Белые башни и золотые главы собора сверкали на яхонтовом небе.' (14:328) The divine vision in his dream seems to reconcile with the vision of beauty of the real world. Alesha glimpses eternity, and embraces it by symbolically embracing the earth: 'Тишина земная как бы сливалась с небесною, тайна земная соприкасалась со звездною… Алеша стоял, смотрел и вдруг как подкошенный повергся на землю.'

This sense of connectivity to the universe is then made even more explicit: 'Как будто нити ото всех этих бесчисленных миров божиих сошлись разом в душе его, и она вся трепетала, «соприкасаясь мирам иным».' (14:328) It is an enormously powerful moment of insight for Alesha that alters completely his view of the world and wider existence. While acknowledging the basic message of the vision of Zosima – that sorrows and fears will turn into a joyous banquet – Alesha's experience opens his heart and mind to all planes of experience. According to E. C. Barksdale, he now 'thinks mythically'.

> Alesha comprehends during the vision a vivid, actual demonstration of the permeability of time and of space. Memory, the onion of Grushenka's tale, the worldly feast at Cana, and the divine Last Supper as first Eucharist become linked on one plane. … Although his behaviour does not change, his way of reacting to reality is radically different. Life and myth are no longer separate entities for him.[274]

Alesha's experience offers healing and catharsis after his mentor's death and his troubled faith following the 'соблазн' of the corpse's 'тлетворный дух'. It also imbues him with indomitable resolve for the future: 'Пал он на землю слабым юношей, а встал твердым на всю жизнь бойцом' (14:328). Here we have not only the reborn Christian but, as Anzhela Putrolainen has remarked, the hero of the Russian *былина*: 'Перерождение Алеши также походит на перерождение героев волшебных сказок и былин: немощный герой после определенного обряда становится богатырем.'[275] Again, the mythical archetypes of the 'collective unconscious' are accessed. And, as a newly-designated 'hero' or knight errant,

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[274] Barksdale, p. 144
[275] Анжела Путролайнен, 'Мотив сна в романе Ф. М. Достоевского «Братья Карамазовы»,' Studia Slavica, I, 1999, 43-49

Alesha soon after leaves the monastery to experience the full spectrum of life's challenges, as was Zosima's wish for him.

Alesha's potently inspirational dream is truly a life-changing moment; a *сновидение*[276] that results in epiphany. He has looked deep within his subconscious and seen the salvation that is possible in Christ. Such deep introspection has opened the path to the highest reality, a point shared by other critics. George Panichas writes: 'For Alyosha this mystical experience has as its media vision and voice, supersensual auditory and visual hallucinations which bring man's finite being, his "seeing self", into contact with the Infinite Being, the Absolute.'[277] Frank goes so far as to say that the spirit of Father Zosima has become re-embodied within Alesha.[278]

Alesha's experience also highlights one aspect of Dostoevskii's religious life that is rarely mentioned. It is Alesha's initial subconscious descent into deep, almost meditative prayer that initiates the sequence of events, and so, in this passage, Dostoevskii effectively shows how a devotion to prayer can give access to God.

Dmitrii Karamazov

A similarly cathartic experience is had by Alesha's brother Dmitrii in his dream of the 'дитё', although it is much less romantically styled and less couched in religious imagery. Yet the stark dream is distinctly out of character for the sensually minded Dmitrii. Dostoevskii highlights its extraordinary nature: 'Приснился ему какой-то странный сон, как-то совсем не к месту и не ко времени.' (14:456) It seems to happen by some mysterious command which induces an instant sleep on Dmitrii, as if he is predestined to have this dream. Coming after Dmitrii's initial questioning by prosecutors over his father's death, at a basic level its harrowing imagery of a burnt-out village and ghost-like, starving residents speaks of his consequent anxiety. But, in portraying a world of suffering beyond his own, where the 'дитё' cannot even suckle his mother's breast, it reveals in Dmitrii a deep sense of injustice and a desire to help, to make a difference, to use his Karamazov impetuousness for a positive end:

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[276] See appendix.
[277] Panichas, p. 178
[278] Frank, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, p. 644

> И чувствует он еще, что подымается в сердце его какое-то никогда еще не бывалое в нем умиление, что плакать ему хочется, что хочет он всем сделать что-то такое, чтобы не плакало больше дитё […] чтоб не было вовсе слез от сей минуты ни у кого и чтобы сейчас же, сейчас же это делать […] со всем безудержем карамазовским. (14:456-57)

He wants to stop the child weeping, which, in Viacheslav Ivanov's mind, is 'начало всякого страдания на земле: весь неиссякаемый грех земли – грех перед детьми.'[279]

His dream then indicates, like Alesha's, a path to salvation, a way towards helping others. It is a path he is destined to tread with Grushen'ka, whose voice he hears in the dream; 'И вот загорелось всё сердце его и устремилось к какому-то свету, и хочется ему жить и жить, идти и идти в какой-то путь, к новому зовущему свету, и скорее, скорее, теперь же, сейчас!' (14:457) The light echoes the 'солнце' of Christ in Alesha's dream, a final, prosperous ideal towards which men must strive. For Dmitrii, the first step on this path is to accept his guilt for his egotism, of not caring for others, of leading a base lifestyle full of scandals, affairs and orgies. It is, according to Frank, 'a dream crystallizing the moral conversion that has taken place within him as a result of all his "torments".'[280]

And indeed, on waking, there is a visible change in his demeanour. As he agrees to sign the declaration transcript he turns to the officials investigating his father's murder: '– Я хороший сон видел, господа, – странно как-то произнес он, с каким-то новым, словно радостью озаренным лицом.' (14:457) Dmitrii now seems determined to accept his guilt for his behaviour, insofar as he places it on a par, even substitutes it, for his guilt in the eyes of the law – for his father's murder, which he did not commit. Essentially, Dmitrii comes to accept his moral guilt after this dream. As he is led away by the prosecutors following the inital investigation, he stops and announces: 'Принимаю муку обвинения и всенародного позора моего, пострадать хочу и страданием очищусь! […] в крови отца моего не повинен! Принимаю казнь не за то, что убил его, а за то, что хотел убить и, может быть, в самом деле убил бы…' (14:458) Later, in holding prison during his trial, Dmitrii

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[279] Иванов, 'Достоевский, трагедия – миф – мистика', in *Собрание сочинений*, 4, p. 544
[280] Ibid., p. 659

passionately tells Alesha: 'За «дитё» и пойду [to Siberia]. Потому что все за всех виноваты.' (15:31) This sentiment, one of the overriding messages of the novel as a whole, is the core of Dmitrii's dream – only afterwards does he acknowledge this universal guilt. He is now determined to put his energy to good use somehow, by channelling it into helping others, 'со всем безудержем карамазовским' – because, equally, everyone is responsible for everyone else's happiness. In this sense his dream is no less momentous than Alesha's *сновидение*, as both instigate an enormous turning point in the character's way of looking at life.

> Dmitri's dream of the hungry babe changes him from an egocentric, self-indulgent personality despairing over his inner division to a more grounded self recognizing the difference between the relative and the absolute. … The symbolism of the starving babe brings to Dmitri the realization of Father Zosima's teaching that 'we are all responsible for all.' In that realization his old problems pale into insignificance.[281]

In fact, Dmitrii, Alesha and Ivan all react differently to the credo that 'все за всех виноваты', and each reaction to human deprivation is manifest in their subconscious experiences. Alesha turns to faith in God in order to give him the strength to make a difference. Ivan is at the opposite pole and refuses to become involved: 'билет на вход спешу возвратить обратно' (14:223), he says in his rebellion against God. Dmitrii treads a middle path of humanism by aiming to use his *карамазовщина* to help others. Alesha and Dmitrii find inspiration in their dreams; but Ivan's total rejection of God and introverted egoism lead him into moral quandary and consequent mental illness after his extended hallucination of the devil.

Their reactions to their subconscious experiences go beyond a simple life choice. As Barksdale says, referring to Dmitrii, their entire conscious perception changes: 'his experience, like Alesha's vision, is more than a mere call to an ethical life. It is a transcendent realization of the unity of the world which results in a new way of processing reality in his mind.'[282] For Ivan, we can turn this on its head and describe his outcome as a transcendent confusion of the chaos of the world. Consciousness has splintered; he seems lost. But for Alesha and Dmitrii, the path has become clear.

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[281] Phyllis Berdt Kenevan, 'Rebirth and the Cognitive Dream: From Dostoevski to Hermann Hesse and C. G. Jung', in Alexej Ugrinsky, Frank S. Lambasa and Valija K. Ozolins (eds.), *Dostoevski and the Human Condition After a Century*, Greenwood Press, Westport, 1986, p. 184
[282] Barksdale, p. 145

In such character-driven work as Dostoevskii's, these subconscious episodes are important turning points in the texts and highlight many of the author's overriding themes for the work as a whole. As Katz says: 'It is always the experiential dream emerging from the subconscious that contains the truth that must eventually be recognised and implemented in the characters' lives.'[283] Barksdale agrees: 'Dostoevsky's realism is centrally concerned with the role of dreams and visions in gaining a new orientation toward reality.'[284]

THE GOLDEN AGE

Dostoevskii's later period of work features a recurring *сон* that occurs in three separate texts, a fact which, alone, signifies its importance. These dreams of the 'Golden Age' – based on Claude Lorrain's painting 'Acis and Galatea', which particularly inspired Dostoevskii in a visit to a Dresden gallery – are strikingly similar in imagery. This is partly because the first in the series forms part of Stavrogin's 'confession' to Bishop Tikhon, a chapter which was not passed by censors and therefore did not form part of the final text of *Бесы* (1871). But the dream's importance to Dostoevskii is highlighted in his apparent need to include this dream somewhere in his published work, and therefore a strikingly similar vision to Stavrogin's appears as Versilov's dream in *Подросток* (1874). The ultimate summation of this dream, however, is left to 'Сон смешного человека' (1877). As well as affording insights into the respective dreamer, all three also afford varying insights into human psychology in general, tapping into the mythical, subconscious power of the 'well' of mankind's collective experience.

Stavrogin

Stavrogin's is the most intensely personal of the three Golden Age dreams. It is an absolute revelation both to the character and the reader. If *Бесы* is read without Stavrogin's 'confession', as originally published, his character remains impassive,

[283] Katz, p. 116
[284] Barksdale, p. 142

insensitive and impenetrable. But by gaining access to his subconscious in his telling of his dream, we can start to understand him better.

Stavrogin himself relates his dream to 'Acis and Galatea'. In the dream, the painting has come to life and represents an ideal of beauty and harmony, a vision of perfect humanity which Stavrogin – quite out of character – seems to understand:

> Чудный сон, высокое заблуждение! Мечта, самая невероятная из всех, какие были, которой всё человечество, всю свою жизнь отдавало все свои силы, для которой всем жертвовало, для которой умирали на крестах и убивались пророки, без которой народы не хотят жить и не могут даже и умереть Всё это ощущение я как будто прожил в этом сне […] всё это я как будто еще видел, когда проснулся и раскрыл глаза, в первый раз в жизни буквально омоченные слезами. Ощущение счастья, еще мне неизвестного, прошло сквозь сердце мое даже до боли. (11:21-22)

Through the character of Stavrogin we get a sense of the extremes of experience that mankind seeks. Stavrogin is essentially a terminally bored man looking for any form of excitement. This leads to his unpredictable actions: some socially unacceptable, for example, his leading of a respected town elder by the nose and biting the ear of another; others, such as the rape of Matresha that leads to her suicide, purely evil. Stavrogin derives pleasure from pain, social awkwardness and extremes of experience, as their intense sensations offer brief escapes from his perennial boredom. He is very much in the line of 'superfluous men' of Russian literature, who have nothing towards which to divert their seemingly boundless energies.[285]

However, Stavrogin's dream shows the polar opposite of his discontent and restlessness – it shows utter peace and happiness, a practically impossible goal which humanity has always nevertheless striven for. Nancy Anderson writes:

> At the time he saw the picture … it apparently did not produce a deep impression upon him … But while he is dreaming, at the moment when his rational mind … no longer controls his thoughts, the picture's influence is able to work upon his emotions. In this state of receptivity, the painting becomes more for Stavrogin than merely a cultural artifact; he reacts to it as a psychological fact, a spiritual reality…[286]

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[285] In character, Stavrogin is probably most akin to Lermontov's Pechorin in *Герой нашего времени* (1839).

[286] Nancy K. Anderson, *The Perverted Ideal in Dostoevsky's* The Devils, Peter Lang, New York, 1997, p. 106

Due to Stavrogin's mask of impassiveness in reality, it seems almost logical that he should only let this mask slip in the privacy of his subconscious. But in letting his guard down, Stavrogin leaves himself open to attack by the evil welling in his subconscious, an evil bred on his past deeds. For it is this vision of bliss, this utter positive extreme, which leads to its polar opposite and causes the subsequent hallucination of Matresha in his room when he awakens. The divine image of the Golden Age, illuminated by the rays of the setting sun, plummets into moral darkness. Those rays remind Stavrogin of the evening of Matresha's suicide, and her haunting hallucination becomes manifest. 'For the first time he feels the full horror of what he did to Matryosha: he caused the sun to go down forever for one little girl, leaving her in the darkness of despair and death.'[287]

Stavrogin himself admits that he wills the appearance of this hallucination every day, as if to torment and take revenge on himself for all of his crimes, following his dream of perfect humanity. He is a blemish on this vision, he is the 'крошечная точка' appearing in the evening sunlight. Stavrogin links this dot to the small red spider he saw at the time of Matresha's suicide – again, the spider motif appears at a moment of great evil. It may be small, but any blemish is big enough to debase an image of perfection.

Stavrogin feels undeserving of his glimpse of ultimate happiness, so, in a form of psychic self-flagellation, his subconscious conjures the opposite extreme: a picture of destroyed innocence, for which he himself is to blame. As Richard Peace states, 'complete freedom for man to do exactly as he pleases cannot be reconciled with earthly paradise'[288]. As we have seen with the Napoleon-aspirant Raskol'nikov, the subconscious does not forget easily, nor is it forgiving. In both Raskol'nikov and Stavrogin, it conjures up terrifying images of their actions. But for the unthinking transgressor Stavrogin, whose only great aspiration is for extremes of experience, his subconscious has become as scheming as his conscious life. It leads him on with visions of perfection, before dashing them with a hallucination of his most awful crime.

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[287] Ibid., pp. 108-09
[288] Richard Peace, *Dostoyevsky – An Examination of the Major Novels*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1971, p. 177

> Only the vision of a Golden Age, symbol of man's supreme beauty and happiness, is able to penetrate Stavrogin's wall of indifference. Similarly only the symbol of extreme evil and misery – Matreša's apparition – can shake Stavrogin's equanimity. … At the moment when Stavrogin 'at last' finds himself capable of love, it is too late. … As he closes his eyes to recall his dream, he is faced by the apparition, and will never be able to rid himself of it.[289]

Versilov

In Versilov's dream, Stavrogin's mythical view of paradise is replaced by an imagined future utopia, 'колыбель европейского человечества […] Здесь был земной рай человечества: боги сходили с небес и роднились с людьми…' He continues: 'Золотой век – мечта самая невероятная из всех, какие были, но за которую люди отдавали всю жизнь свою и все свои силы, для которой умирали и убивались пророки, без которой народы не хотят жить и не могут даже и умереть!' (13:375)

Like Stavrogin's dream, emphasis is given to mankind's striving for this ideal, while consciously and subconsciously acknowledging its impossibility. Such a paradox is profoundly human, a fact that touches Versilov as much as it did Stavrogin, as he too awakes with tears in his eyes: 'Ощущение счастья, мне еще неизвестного, прошло сквозь сердце мое, даже до боли; это была всечеловеческая любовь.' (13:375) But Versilov adds a contemporary spin to this concept upon awakening from his dream. As Stavrogin saw the tiny spider which invoked the vision of Matresha, so Versilov witnesses a downfall. But it is not his own; it is instead a premonition of apocalypse: 'это заходящее солнце первого дня европейского человечества, которое я видел во сне моем, обратилось для меня тотчас, как я проснулся, наяву, в заходящее сонце последнего дня европейского человечества! Тогда особенно слышался над Европой как бы звон похоронного колокола.' (13:375)

Having seen an ideal of civilisation in his dream, Versilov wakes up to a warped view of this ideal. He had been touring Europe before he experienced this dream in a

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[289] Elizabeth Welt Trahan, 'The Golden Age – Dream of a Ridiculous Man?: A Concentric Analysis of Dostoevskij's Short Story', *The Slavic and East European Journal*, Winter 1959, vol. XVII (New Series, Vol. III), No. 4, pp. 349-371

German hotel, and muses: 'Там была брань и логика […] И это потому […] что один я, как русский, был тогда в Европе *единственным европейцем*. Я не про себя говорю – я про всю русскую мысль говорю.' (13:375-76) In both reality and dream, Versilov is a voyeur of European ambitions and values. His dream portrays the intended ideal of those values, but his awakening brings a realisation of the probable outcome. Instead of co-existing with gods who have descended from heaven to mingle with men ('боги сходили с небес и роднились с людьми'), contemporary European man has sought to deny the existence of God or gods and indeed sought to become like God and have the intended paradise all to themselves. It is 'an atheistic world deprived of belief in a divine Christ – a world that is the final outcome of the inexorable European process of self-destruction. … the result would be, in its own way, a Golden Age, but one stemming from profane rather than sacred love.'[290] In Versilov's view, European man's 'брань и логика' is destroying their intended ideal. As a Russian, still an outsider to Europe, he would like to perceive himself as a guardian of this ideal – as he says, 'высшая русская мысль есть всепримирение идей' (13:375). So he therefore becomes, in the spirit of his dream, 'единственный европеец' in Europe. This thinking is allied very closely to Dostoevskii's own disdain of European intellectualism and his belief in the spiritual superiority of Orthodox Russia.

The dream also allows the reader to discern a glimmer of religiosity within Versilov. He is, after all, not purely a rationalist or a humanist, as he portrays himself. As Frank points out, he defines himself as a 'philosophical deist', not an atheist, and this suggests 'an unsatisfied religious longing that remains an abstraction rather than a vitally active personal relationship with the sacred.'[291] Panichas is most direct in his assessment of Versilov as an agnostic humanist:

> Can there be love without God? … Versilov wants desperately to answer it in the affirmative; he wants to, but ultimately cannot, and he knows he cannot. … His humanist creed, like his vision, is rent by its inadequacy and incertitude, by its own futile exaggeration of the human prospect. It

[290] Frank, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, p. 190
[291] Ibid.

> is a 'fantasy', he admits, and the humanist dilemma is immediately, and for all time, crystallized in his admission.'[292]

Through his dream, he comes to question the very theories on which he has based his life. His moral dilemma becomes more and more evident in his conscious life towards the end of *Подросток*, when he begins to show signs of a split personality. The dream, which seems to cause this neurosis, therefore highlights the danger to the individual that an absence of spirituality brings, as much as it highlights the need for God in man in general. It also highlights other distinct traits of universal human psychology: mankind's striving to the impossible ideal of the 'Golden Age', followed by the warping of this aim for mankind's own ends; the will to power; bickering, argument, war.

The Ridiculous Man

These themes are built upon in 'Сон смешного человека', in many ways the ultimate conclusion of this 'Golden Age'. Dreamed at a time when he is considering suicide, the *сон* sees the 'Ridiculous Man' actually transported to this paradise. Unlike Stavrogin and Versilov, he does not remain a mere voyeur but becomes an active participant of society in this perfect world, into which he is immediately welcomed and loved like a new arrival in heaven, someone who has suffered on our earth to live on this new paradise equivalent.

The citizens of this earth know no suffering or pain. Theirs is a life based on feeling and intuition, not reason:

> знание их восполнялось и питалось иными проникновениями, чем у нас на земле, и что стремления их были тоже совсем иные. Они не желали ничего и были спокойны, они не стремились к познанию жизни так, как мы стремимся сознать ее, потому что жизнь их была восполнена. Но знание их было глубже и высшее, чем у нашей науки […] они же и без науки знали, как им жить […] (25:113)

This utopia is compounded by their lack of spiritual needs due to an inherent peace and fulfilment: 'у них не было веры, зато было твердое знание, что когда восполнится их земная радость до пределов природы земной, тогда наступит для них … еще большее расширение соприкосновения с Целым вселенной.' In

[292] Panichas, pp. 139-40

short, it is a community of extraordinary love: ‘казалось, и всю жизнь свою они проводили лишь в том, что любовались друг другом. Это была какая-то влюбленность друг в друга, всецелая, всеобщая.’ (25:114)

It is this total, uninhibited love that awakens a similar feeling in the Ridiculous Man for the people on ‘his’ earth:

> Я часто говорил им, что я всё это давно уже прежде предчувствовал, что вся эта радость и слава сказывалась мне еще на нашей земле зовущею тоскою, доходившею подчас до нестерпимой скорби; что я предчувствовал всех их и славу их в снах моего сердца и в мечтах ума моего, что я часто не мог смотреть, на земле нашей, на заходящее солнце без слез… Что в ненависти моей к людям нашей земли заключалась всегда тоска […] (25:114)

He has buried this love, or refused to accept it, until now, when he experiences it fully in this dream. Dostoevskii implies here that this intuitive depth of feeling lies in us all. For some it comes naturally, consciously; others derive an inkling from moments of beauty, like that of the setting sun; while others must search for it in, or be awoken to it by, their subconscious.

However, having discovered this love, a change comes. What happens next the protagonist describes as ‘нечто до такого ужаса истинное, что это не могло бы пригрезиться во сне.’ (25:115) This terrible truth is a fundamental, tragic trait of human psychology – its fallibility. What he describes is no less than a second Fall of mankind.

Unknown to him, the Ridiculous Man is the serpent in this paradise. He unconsciously introduces ‘earthly’ sins: ‘Они научились лгать и полюбили ложь и познали красоту лжи. … Затем быстро родилось сладострастие, сладострастие породило ревность, ревность – жестокость … очень скоро брызнула первая кровь’ (25:115-16). This process echoes the destructive virus of self-righteousness and will to power in Raskol’nikov’s apocalyptic dream: ‘Как скверная трихина, как атом чумы, заражающий целые государства, так и я заразил собой всю эту счастливую, безгрешную до меня землю.’ (25:115) However, Frank depicts the Ridiculous Man’s act as almost unwitting:

> the emphasis is no longer on the self-destructive horror of a world lacking any instinctive ties of mutuality between human and human; it is, rather, on the dialectical movement by which self-awareness engenders

> egoism and egoism gives rise to a world whose institutions express the loss in reality of what man becomes aware of in thought. … The result was a growing awareness of what had been lost and the attempt to re-create it artificially by self-conscious means.[293]

Temira Pachmuss expresses this Fall in terms of man's natural dualism:

> Reason, as an intermediary between man's spiritual and animal nature, is a positive human quality. It is necessary in order to convey the revelations of man's spiritual being to his physical self. But reason is the source of man's dual nature for it gives man the freedom of choice between gratification of earthly impulses and spiritual endeavour.[294]

Before the Ridiculous Man arrived, the inhabitants of this Golden Age had very little 'physical self', instead existing on a more 'spiritual' plane. But he has introduced the 'трихина' of freedom of choice and self-awareness into their society, and egoism soon develops. The downfall of this paradise spirals out of control, mirroring the development of human history – languages, science, justice, organised religion, war – until: 'Они смеялись даже над возможностью этого прежнего их счастья и называли его мечтой' (25:116), much as the atheists in Dostoevskii's time (and today) disregarded the Bible and its creation story, with its Eden paradise.

The final tragedy for the Ridiculous Man follows: he now has the earth he left behind and so longed for; and moreover, he loves it. Following his arrival he says to the 'спутник' who guides him there: 'На нашей земле мы истинно можем любить лишь с мучением и только через мучение! […] Я хочу мучение, чтоб любить. Я хочу […] лишь одну ту землю, которую я оставил, и не хочу, не принимаю жизни ни на какой иной!..' (25:111-12) And after the 'fall', he admits: 'любил их, может быть, еще больше, чем прежде […] Я полюбил их оскверненную ими землю еще больше, чем когда она была раем, за то лишь, что на ней явилось горе.' (25:117) In a desperate attempt to introduce them to Christ, he then commits the final blasphemy:

> об них я плакал, жалея их. Я простирал к ним руки … Я умолял их, чтоб они распяли меня на кресте … я хотел принять от них муки, я жаждал мук, жаждал, чтоб в этих муках пролита была моя кровь до капли. Но они лишь смеялись надо мной и стали меня считать под конец за юродивого. (25:117)

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[293] Frank, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, pp. 354-55
[294] Pachmuss, p. 88

As the only witness to remember the perfect, heavenly happiness of before, the Ridiculous Man attempts to become a Christ-like figure – albeit a tarnished one. He suffers the same rejection as Christ did, his message of a way to salvation is rejected – yet he still loves these 'sinners'.

This introduces the notion of the Ridiculous Man as this world's 'creator' – for it is, after all, his dream, and he has descended to the subconscious depths of this world within him just as God is said to have descended to earth and became man through Christ. And just as many men rejected Christ, so do the inhabitants of the dream. The Ridiculous Man therefore represents both good and evil: he is Christ and the serpent at once. He is the creator and the destroyer of this universe, and as such he is at its very core, whether the inhabitants of this world recognise it or not. 'Жизнь и мир от меня зависит' (25:232), Dostoevskii has him say in his notes for the tale.

Summing up his existential numbness as he leads towards contemplating suicide before the dream, the Ridiculous Man says: 'Я вдруг почувствовал, что мне *всё равно* было бы, существовал ли бы мир или если б нигде ничего не было.' (25:105) The dream is the antithesis of this feeling. It conveys the fact that every individual is important because every individual is a world of his or her own. Moreover, no man or woman is alone, because these worlds all meet in a common, human psychology in the 'collective unconscious', the source of myth. Though others come to mock his belief in his dream, the Ridiculous Man counters: 'Сон? что такое сон? А наша-то жизнь не сон?' (25:118) All subconscious planes are united in such a 'continuity hypothesis', and all humanity is united in them.

In 'Сон смешного человека', then, Dostoevskii presents a picture of mankind, a 'предельный универсализм', according to Bakhtin.[295] The Ridiculous Man had difficulty relating to the inhabitants of the paradise he entered – only after their fall can he understand them and indeed love them. The author implies that man cannot be man without suffering, doubt, guilt, envy, hatred, lust and every other sin – but life without these awaits every man in heaven. Of his dream of earthly paradise, the

[295] Бахтин, p. 254. He adds that the tale takes the predominant form of menippean satire, 'жанра последних вопросов мировоззрения', which are asked implicitly. 'Сколько-нибудь развернутой дискурсивной аргументации в нем нет. Здесь очень ярко проявляется та исключительная способность Достоевского художественно видеть и чувствовать идею.'

Ridiculous Man affirms: 'пусть это никогда не сбудется' (25:118). This presents the ultimate paradox of the Golden Age: that in the paradise towards which man strives, man would no longer be man. It is a mixture of virtues and faults that makes humanity what it is.

From personal (Stavrogin) to Europe-wide (Versilov) to humanity-spanning (the Ridiculous Man): these dreams offer a graduating perspective of overriding psychological tendencies. It logically follows that the intense insight of all three of these dreams are deeply cathartic to the dreamer. As Robin Miller states: 'A character who experiences an edenic vision emerges from the experience with an inevitable sense of loss and, in some way, is converted.'[296]

Stavrogin feels a happiness never before experienced after his dream, and he cries for the first, and perhaps only time. At this moment we see the man behind the impassive mask. But the subsequent appearance of Matresha is consequently triggered by a guilt mechanism of his subconscious, and becomes a tormenting neurosis. It haunts him every day, indeed he himself evokes it, and it perhaps leads him to realise that he will forever be denied happiness in life. Consequently, it must play a major factor in his suicide.[297]

Versilov too experiences great happiness at experiencing the 'Золотой век' in his dream, and this too is unusual for a character who is not exactly portrayed as emotional. But this joy is again tempered by reality, as he attains a deeper understanding of the situation in Europe upon awakening, and realises that European civilisation has strayed from the ambition of the Golden Age towards distinctly uglier, human ideals of power.

The language used by both Versilov and Stavrogin undergoes a significant change during their respective relations of their visions. Both presented as seemingly cold, impassive characters, their language develops into an almost poetic style, full of emotive expression. For Catteau, this is proof that these two dreams already tap into

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[296] Robin Feuer Miller, 'Dostoevsky's "The Dream of a Ridiculous Man": Unsealing the Generic Envelope,' in Elizabeth Cheresh Allen and Gary Saul Morson (eds.), *Freedom and Responsibility in Russian Literature*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 1995, p. 94

[297] This, then, adds greater weight to the theory that 'У Тихона' is an integral chapter of *Бесы*, an opinion strongly contested by some critics.

a type of 'collective unconscious'. Referring to Versilov, he writes: 'where does this caustic aristocrat find the poetic prose full of musical harmony and smooth alliteration, if not from the exalted word, the speech inspired by collective myth'[298]. Dmitrii Chizhevskii, too, writes of a 'higher sphere' from which Dostoevskii's dreams seem to emanate: 'сны для Достоевского часто приходят из той же высшей сферы, которой причастно, с которой связано человеческое бытие. Сны героев Достоевского раскрывают глубочайший смысл яви, в снах открывается то, что недоступно бодрствующему сознанию. Ряд таких «вещих» снов проходит через все творчество Достоевского'[299]. Dostoevskii's visions of the Golden Age, says Catteau, are just single examples of the digressionary 'novellas' in his works that all stem from this mythical source. This goes some way towards explaining why these dreams of the Golden Age eschew God and are in fact a 'pagan dream of happiness and love for humanity without God'[300]. There is no God in the depths of mankind's collective psyche, only a need for spirituality. In the Golden Age, man finds it in peaceful communion with fellow man and nature. The dreams, then, 'express the ontological yearning of the human spirit.'[301]

Yet Dostoevskii demands that man must find God to be able to fully attain this paradise, and that is why these dreams descend into horror. There are clues in the text as to the temporality of the Golden Age, most noticeably the setting sun. Its red rays suffuse the visions of Stavrogin and Versilov with a sense of encroaching darkness, and also bring to mind the tint of the stained moon in Raskol'nikov's murder dream. The colour is then used in a bolder shade as these visions of perfection break down: Stavrogin's setting sun becomes the little red spider on the geranium leaf; Versilov's becomes the fires of the Paris Commune. In 'Сон смешного человека', like Raskol'nikov's other two anxiety dreams, the earth runs red with the blood of egoistic humanity. While Dostoevskii is apparently eager to portray the perfection of these myth-visions, for him they are incomplete without God.

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[298] Catteau, p. 324
[299] Дмитрий Чижевский, 'Достоевский – психолог,' in Бем (ed.), *О Достоевском – сборник статей,* 2, p. 61
[300] Catteau, p. 377
[301] Ibid., p. 381

If we are to embrace Catteau's opinion of the Golden Age as a mythical aside to the Dostoevskian text, then, in its detail alone, the short story 'Сон смешного человека' must be pure myth. Yet it shows that there is nothing wrong in striving towards this ideal paradise and, indeed there are hints of a deep-set religious feeling in the Ridiculous Man. Despite his failure to mention Christ in his conversion, Jackson finds a religious basis for the protagonist's search for 'истина' and 'жизнь' in an old Orthodox text by the Archpriest Avvakum (1621-81): 'These are the Divine names: Being, Light, Truth, Life'[302].

The Ridiculous Man's dream changes his life forever; primarily because it averts his suicide by making him realise that life is worth living. Before the dream, he was in danger of becoming another Underground Man, isolated in his misanthropy. But now, having seen humanity in all its colours in his dream, he makes philanthropy his goal in life. It is a moment of inspirational illumination on a subconsciously deeper, and therefore more profound plane. 'The ridiculous man expresses Dostoevsky's own belief that the potential for spiritual, or psychological, change, lies within man … that suddenly the truth could come to man 'even in an hour' – *if* man wanted it. Such a moment of course, would be a moment of revelation.'[303] Dostoevskii also wrote of such a revelation in his own personal musings on the Golden Age in his *Дневник писателя* of January 1876. The article 'Золотой век в кармане' contains the lines: 'И эта мощь есть в каждом из вас, но до того глубоко запрятанная, что давно уже стала казаться невероятною. И неужели, неужели золотой век существует лишь на одних фарфоровых чашках?' (22:13)

After his dream, the Ridiculous Man aims to fight a battle for love against reason, intuition against logic, heart against head – one of the principal conflicts in his dream, which 'becomes the centre of the entire spiritual history of humanity'[304]:

> Главное – люби других как себя […] больше ровно ничего не надо: тотчас найдешь как устроиться. А между тем ведь это только – старая истина, которую биллион раз повторяли и читали, да ведь не ужилась же! «Сознание жизни выше жизни, знание законов счастья – выше счастья» – вот с чем бороться надо! И буду. (25:119)

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[302] Jackson, *The Art of Dostoevsky*, p. 283
[303] Ibid., p. 282
[304] Frank, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, p. 353

Fittingly, he says, ‘сны, кажется, стремит не рассудок, а желание, не голова, а сердце’ (25:108), as if they are subconscious emissaries directly from man’s soul.

It must also be noted that Dostoevskii’s consistent credo of ‘все за всех виноваты’ is also made manifest in this extended subconscious episode; for it is the Ridiculous Man’s remorse over his dismissal of the poor girl on the street that sets off his train of thought that leads into his dream. Jackson writes: ‘Psychologically, the dream is a reflex of his guilt; it explores the macrocosmic implications of his rebuff of the child, the symbol and embodiment of innocence and beauty.’[305] The pre-lapsarian society of the dream symbolises the innocence of the child; the Ridiculous Man’s ‘rebuff’ is a symbolic destruction of innocence, which is borne out in the society’s Fall. Therefore the dream can be read as a method of subconsciously resolving personal psychology, which is then resolved in reality when the Ridiculous Man finds the girl he wronged – instead of destroying her, as Stavrogin did. Yet, in its self-defence mechanism to prevent the Ridiculous Man’s suicide, it draws from the well of collective human experience.

‘После сна моего потерял слова.’ (25:118) This line effectively states that the implications of this dream – encompassing the historical experiences of Christian man – cannot be put into a form that a man or woman can effectively relate. As Bakhtin emphasises, ‘истина, по Достоевскому, может быть только предметом живого видения, а не отвлеченного познания.’[306] It is instead our day-to-day actions that can become a more effective expression. The Ridiculous Man knows that the perfect world he experienced is impossible on earth, but it is the striving for this ideal, this ‘истина’, that awakens the goodness and joy that is possible for humanity.[307] He says: ‘я видел истину, – не то что изобрел умом, а видел, видел, и *живой образ* ее наполнил душу мою навеки.’ (25:118) Despite facing the mockery of others for his philanthropic zeal – the sole reason for his ‘ridiculousness’ – this man is truly happy for perhaps the first time in his life. His dream, a powerful insight into the psychology of the human condition, has made this possible.

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[305] Jackson, *The Art of Dostoevsky*, p. 278
[306] Бахтин, p. 262
[307] In his *Дневник писателя* of January 1876, Dostoevskii writes: ‘*счастье не в счастье, а лишь в его достижении*. Настанет скука и тоска: всё сделано и нечего более делать, всё известно и нечего более узнавать.’ (22:34)

Dostoevskii

Dostoevskii was a great believer in the power of dreams, and often paid great attention to their apparent message. It is apparent that he also devoted much thought to the origin of dreams, their purpose and effect on people, although such musings are not immediately evident in his non-fiction. However, his fiction contains passages where the narrator calls a halt to the events of the text in order to question and ponder the nature of dreams. At these moments, the narrator even seems to be supplanted by Dostoevskii, such is the personal and genuinely inquisitive tone.

One of the most notable instances of such a narrative intrusion by the author comes directly before Raskol'nikov's dream of the beaten mare. As has been previously mentioned, Dostoevskii highlights the significance of the dream by deliberately framing it within the text, by using a shift to the present tense, and also by prefacing it with a paragraph of his own thoughts. Dostoevskii makes bold claims of this literary dream, further highlighting its importance; for in describing the lucidity of such 'болезненные сны', he seems to be praising his own technique of fantastic realism, embodied in the dream he is about to describe:

> В болезненном состоянии сны отличаются часто необыкновенною выпуклостью, яркостью и чрезвычайным сходством с действительностью. Слагается иногда картина чудовищная, но обстановка и весь процесс всего представления бывают при этом до того вероятны и с такими тонкими, неожиданными, но художественно соответствующими всей полноте картины подробностями, что их и не выдумать наяву этому же самому сновидцу, будь он такой же художник, как Пушкин или Тургенев. Такие сны, болезненные сны, всегда долго помнятся и производят сильное впечатление на расстроенный и уже возбужденный организм человека. (6:45-46)

Such dreams may in fact be regarded as the pinnacle of Dostoevskii's fantastic realism, for, in their direct connection to the subconscious, they go beyond art to something more indefinably elemental, mythical and primal. Raskol'nikov's dream plumbs the very depth of his psyche, dredging up forgotten details with symbolic nuance. Such symbolism tied directly to the protagonist presents the author with a much greater opportunity to flesh out character and theme. By eschewing a scene set in, for example, St Petersburg's streets (which could easily have been managed) for a

scene played out in the protagonist's subconscious, Dostoevskii actually employs a greater realism; a psychological realism that invests his characters with life.

> … had Dostoevsky put forward dream material as an incident observed in waking life, such an objective presentation would have robbed the incident of its tremendous power to synthesize Raskolnikov's subjective psychological state. Conversely, as a dream, the synthesis is uniquely a creation of the hero and, as such, is a pure symbolization of his personal construction of reality.[308]

Dostoevskii, then, draws the reader's awareness to the subconscious power of the dream he is about to describe; the reader pauses and draws breath before plunging into Raskol'nikov's psyche, and becomes immersed in its symbolic world, so vividly portrayed as if by 'Пушкин или Тургенев'. Fittingly, Fanger links the form of fantastic realism in this passage to the novel as a whole: 'the fact is unmistakable: this whole novel is like a bad dream, and the social and physical Petersburg in which the action takes place is no less so.'[309]

A similar narrative passage can be found in *Идиот*, one which raises even more far-reaching questions about the origin and power of dreams. It comes at a time when Prince Myshkin is having various delirious, ill-defined dreams featuring a 'преступница' as he prepares to read the letters from Nastas'ia Filippovna to Aglaia Epanchina, handed to him by the latter. The narrator, even somewhat incongruously, suddenly starts wondering about the hidden messages and feelings behind dreams, which seem to contain something fundamental to life's meaning.

> Иногда снятся странные сны, невозможные и неестественные; пробудясь, вы припоминаете их ясно и удивляетесь странному факту: вы помните прежде всего, что разум не оставлял вас во всё продолжение вашего сновидения; вспоминаете даже, что вы действовали чрезвычайно хитро и логично во всё это долгое время, когда вас окружали убийцы, когда они с вами хитрили […] Но почему же в то же самое время разум ваш мог помириться с такими очевидными нелепостями и невозможностями, которыми, между прочим, был сплошь наполнен ваш сон? […] Почему тоже, пробудясь от сна и совершенно уже войдя в действительность, вы чувствуете почти каждый раз, а иногда с необыкновенною силой впечатления, что вы оставляете вместе со сном что-то для вас неразгаданное? Вы усмехаетесь нелепости вашего сна и чувствуете

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[308] Brown, p. 101
[309] Fanger, p. 206

> в то же время, что в сплетении этих нелепостей заключается какая-то мысль, но мысль уже действительная, нечто принадлежащее к вашей настоящей жизни, нечто существующее и всегда существовавшее в вашем сердце; вам как будто было сказано вашим сном что-то новое, пророческое, ожидаемое вами; впечатление ваше сильно, оно радостное или мучительное, но в чем оно заключается и что было сказано вам – всего этого вы не можете ни понять, ни припомнить. (8:377-78)

The tone here is so personal and almost naively inquisitive that it seems to jar with the rest of the narrative. Even though Miller has pointed out in her extensive study of *Идиот*[310] that the novel contains many strata of narrative voice, this passage does not weave into these different modes like in the rest of the novel. It stands out boldly, almost as if it is the author's own testament.

He marvels at the malleability of logic in dreams, of being at the height of logical awareness yet nonchalantly accepting, for example, complete transformations in other people. In an echo of his previous major 'fictional' musing on dreams, the narrator/Dostoevskii here uses a dream of 'убийцы' as an almost common example. It is clear he is once again referring to 'morbid' (*болезненные*) *сны*. He also muses on the lost meaning in dreams, something vital, intrinsic, 'что-то для вас неразгаданное', 'нечто принадлежащее к вашей настоящей жизни, нечто существующее и всегда существовавшее в вашем сердце'.

These passages hint at existential angst, in not being able to know the mystery of the human condition. But it could also be said to speak of a 'collective unconscious' from which dreams take shape, that 'well' from which all our experience genetically derives. As a whole it is completely unknowable; instead it presents itself in fragments of dream imagery (and, indeed, to the varying degrees of the other subconscious forms discussed in this thesis) from which the dreamer can gain an inkling of true meaning. This is the essence of the 'новое, пророческое' feeling Dostoevskii writes about when he describes his personal belief in the power of dreams to eclipse the ability of the conscious mode in purity of meaning (Dalton's 'primary process'[311]).

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[310] Robin Feuer Miller, *Dostoevsky and* The Idiot – *Author, Narrator, and Reader*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge and London, 1981
[311] Dalton, p. 8

This is again reiterated, to a lesser degree, in 'Сон смешного человека'. The Ridiculous Man's musings on the nature of dreams before his actual dream experience again seem to cross the narrative divide between author and character: 'Сны, как известно, чрезвычайно странная вещь: одно представляется с ужасающею ясностью … а через другое перескакиваешь, как бы не замечая вовсе, например, через пространство и время.' (25:108) The first-person voice seems to assume a more personal guise here, and Dostoevskii's own opinions creep in – perhaps partially because 'Сон смешного человека' was published in his *Дневник писателя*. The subsequent line, 'сны, кажется, стремит не рассудок, а желание, не голова, а сердце' (25:108), can also be attributed as much to Dostoevskii as to the Ridiculous Man, as it is most apt for the message of the story – for it is in his dream that the narrator finds the love in his heart for humanity. It once again underlines Dostoevskii's beliefs that dreams reveal instinctual and intuitive elements of human psychology.

In these moments we see a bridge between Dostoevskii's fiction, opinion and experience. But his strong belief in the power of dreams means that he made many records of his own *сны*. His own anxiety dreams are a case in point and, indeed, often led to even greater anxiety – no more so than when, particularly later in life, they pertained to his family.

His *кошмары* about his children are particularly harrowing. In the summer of 1873, separated from his wife in children, who were staying in their summer home in Staraia Russa while he worked as an editor in St Petersburg, Dostoevskii demands constant updates from his wife; letters are exchanged almost every day. His letters make clear that his loneliness is only compounding his growing depression due to his energy-sapping work for *Гражданин*; and his own feverish illnesses, making him only too aware of the frailty of the human body, cause undue alarm over the health of his loved ones – 'сплю худо, кошмары, дурные сны и желудок расстроен', (29/1:282) he writes.

Such a tense state of depression, anxiety and ill health is largely the cause of the nightmares he goes on to describe:

> С субботы на воскресение, между кошмарами, видел сон, что Федя взобрался на подоконник и упал из 4-го этажа. Как только он полетел, перевертываясь, вниз, я закрыл руками глаза и закричал в отчаянии: прощай, Федя! И тут проснулся. Напиши мне как можно скорее о Феде, не случилось ли с ним чего с субботы на воскресение. Я во второе зрение верю, тем более что это факт, и не успокоюсь до письма твоего.
>
> Сплю я просыпаясь ночью раз до 10, каждый час и меньше, часто потея. Сегодня, с воскресения на понедельник, видел во сне, что Лиля сиротка и попала к какой-то мучительнице и та ее засекла розгами, большими, солдатскими, так что я уже застал ее на последнем издыхании, и она всё говорила: мамочка, мамочка! От этого сна я сегодня чуть с ума не сойду.' (29/1: 282-283)

Such anxiety was not isolated. Two years later, on a trip to Bad Ems in Germany to treat his lung condition, a similar, if less detailed letter is written to his wife: 'Я сегодня видел во сне и Федю и Лилю, и беспокоюсь: не случилось ли с ними чего! Ах, Аня, я об них думаю день и ночь. Ну умру, что я им оставлю'. (29/2:47)

In contrast, Dostoevskii's dreams of his wife tend to focus on visualising her or being near her, and therefore assume the role of wish fulfilment. His few anxiety dreams regarding Anna Grigor'evna seem to be caused by the notorious jealousy over his wife that he often found hard to control. When, in a letter of June 1880 Anna says, perhaps teasingly, 'я замечаю из твоих писем явную ко мне холодность' (29/1:348n3), Dostoevskii, who is in Moscow for the Pushkin celebrations, replies: 'я всё вижу прескверные сны, кошмары, каждую ночь о том, что ты мне изменяешь с другими. Ей-богу. Страшно мучаюсь.' (29/1:179) Another example of a jealous anxiety dream can be found in his notebook of 1876: 'С 18-го на 19 июля видел сон, Аня, второй муж, заговор мой с нею. Кошмар.'[312] This sketch in itself hints at the central premise of *Вечный муж*.

Perhaps Dostoevskii's most powerful anxiety dreams were those of the deceased members of his close family, which almost always featured disturbing, nightmarish scenarios. The author increasingly came to associate dreams about his father and brother Mikhail with an impending disaster in his life, as if they were portentous warnings. An indicator of just how important Dostoevskii found these dreams can be

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[312] *Литературное наследство*, 83, p. 467

ascertained from Anna Grigor'evna's *Воспоминания*. She recalls how, within the first few days of her acquaintance with the author in the role of stenographer, her future husband told her: 'Мои сны всегда бывают вещими. Когда я вижу во сне покойного брата Мишу, а особенно когда мне снится отец, я знаю, что мне грозит беда.' Anna continues:

> Ф. Михайлович придавал значение снам. Очень тревожился он, когда видел во сне брата Мишу и в особенности своего отца. Сновидение предвещало горе или беду, и я была несколько раз свидетельницею тому, что вскоре (дня 2-3 спустя) после подобного сновидения наступила чья-либо болезнь или смерть в нашей семье, доселе здоровой, тяжелый припадок с Ф. М. или какая-нибудь материальная беда.[313]

These dreams, of course, could be viewed as the result, and cause, of inner torment and stress; yet they seem to contain some prescient element that demarcates them from simple anxiety dreams.

A very pertinent example is the dream Dostoevskii says he had on the eve of the death of Emiliia Fedorovna, his late brother Mikhail's wife:

> Представь, какой я видел сон 5-го числа (я записал число): вижу брата, он лежит на постели, а на шее у него перерезана артерия, и он истекает кровью, я же в ужасе думаю бежать к доктору, и между тем останавливает мысль, что ведь он весь истечет кровью до доктора. Странный сон, и, главное, 5-е августа, накануне ее смерти. (30/1:109)

The experience still seems fresh in Dostoevskii's mind, and the concrete evidence of the time of the dream, which he wrote down, lends it credence as a subconscious warning or prediction of Emiliia Fedorovna's death.

A more extended dream account featuring both Mikhail and his father, and which appears to have real, physical consequences, can be found in Dostoevskii's notebooks for *Бесы*. On June 16/17, 1870, he writes:

> Ночью видел во сне брата, он как-бы воскрес, но живет особо от семьи. Я будто у него и чувство что со мной как-бы что-то неладно: потеря сознания, точно после обмороков […] Я пошел в какую-то ближнюю большую больницу посоветоваться с доктором. Брат как-будто ко мне ласковее.

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[313] А. Г. Достоевская, *Воспоминания*, Художественная литература, Москва, 1971, p. 75

> Проснулся, заснул опять и как-бы продолжение сна: Вижу отца (давно не снился). Он указал мне на мою грудь, под правым соском и сказал: у тебя все хорошо, *но здесь очень худо*. Я посмотрел и как будто действительно какой-то нарост под соском. Отец сказал: *нервы не расстроивай*. Потом у отца какой-то семейный праздник и вошла его старуха мать, моя бабка, и все предки. Он был рад. Из его слов я заключил что мне очень плохо. Я показал другому доктору на мою грудь, он сказал: да это тут. Вам жить не долго; *вы на последних днях*.
>
> NB. Проснувшись утром, в 12 часов, я заметил, почти на том месте груди, на которое указывал отец, точку, как бы в орех величной, где была чрезвычайная острая боль, если щупать пальцем – точно дотрагиваешься до больно ушибленного места; никогда этого не было прежде.
>
> NB_2. Легкие мои опять наполняются мокротой; свистит и дышать тяжеле.
>
> Вообще эта болезнь [presumably emphysema] полтора года идет видимо усиливаясь. Зарождается одышка.
>
> NB_3. Должно быть есть в настоящую минутку и припадки геморроя. Боль в животе как перед Кровотечением. Пищеварение хорошо.[314]

This dream is remarkable in its detail, and even more so for its apparent physical manifestation – 'точка, как бы в орех величной' – which appears on waking. Of course, this may have already existed without Dostoevskii's conscious knowing – as he says, it is only sore 'если щупать пальцем' – yet the fact remains that it has been pointed out to him by his father in a dream. Unfortunately, there is no direct medical corroboration for the appearance of this mark, and Anna makes no mention of the episode. Either the author kept it to himself, or it was fabrication, or exaggeration. However, Dostoevskii must have presumed no one – bar perhaps his wife – would ever read his notebooks, so there would be little reason for him to make up or exaggerate such an incident. It makes this dream account all the more compelling.

James Rice gives a possible explanation. He states that a doctor's letter in 1866 had warned that emphysema, the pulmonary illness that would eventually lead to the writer's death, 'would develop precisely from the focal spot of Dostoevsky's dream, below the right nipple under the fifth rib.' [315] Even if we take into account that

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[314] In Е. Н. Коншина (ed.), *Записные тетради Ф. М. Достоевского*, Academia, Москва, 1935, p. 65
[315] Rice, pp. 102-03

Dostoevskii had this knowledge, its manifestation in a dream is no less remarkable in its detail; the dream is undeniably a subconscious health warning. From its beginning, when Dostoevskii is with his brother, it is clear he is unwell. He immediately seeks a diagnosis at a hospital and, after a waking interval, he receives two. Despite the prognosis – 'здесь очень худо' – his father is kindly and concerned and offers advice: 'нервы не расстроивай.' The second prognosis is far more clinical in its bleakness: 'Вам жить не долго; *вы на последних днях*.' Even the fact that he is at a celebration with his father, grandmother and other deceased ancestors seems to indicate that he may, in reality, soon be with the dead.

Dostoevskii's following notes clearly show a heightened preoccupation with his ill health. His emphysema is worsening to the point where breathing is difficult – indeed the 'точка, как бы в орех величной' around the area of his lungs may be a physical symptom of this – and he thinks he has haemorrhoids. The dream drives home the point that he is not at all healthy; and that, perhaps, his only hope lies in his father's advice: 'нервы не расстроивай.' In reality, however, no great calamity befalls the Dostoevskiis within days of this terrifying dream – it is as if the dream's warning was trauma enough.

Another stark warning is spelled out in a dream of 1871, which Dostoevskii relates to Anna Grigor'evna in a letter from Wiesbaden, where he is deep in the thrall of roulette and keeps asking her to send more money:

> когда я получил сегодня 30 талеров, то я *не* хотел играть по двум причинам: 1) письмо твое слишком меня поразило: вообразить только, что с тобой будет! […] и 2-е) я сегодня ночью видел во сне отца, но в таком ужасном виде, в каком он два раза только являлся мне в жизни, предрекая грозную беду, и два раза сновидение сбылось. (А теперь как припомню и мой сон три дня тому, что ты поседела, то замирает сердце! Господи, что с тобою будет, когда ты получишь это письмо!) (29/1:197)

We can guess that one of the two other dreams of his father he mentions relates to the dream of his father's diagnosis, and how it came true when the hazelnut-sized mark 'appeared' on his chest upon wakening. The other, unfortunately, remains a mystery. In general, these dreams seem to indicate to Dostoevskii the consequences of continuing to gamble. The first dream, chronologically, is of his wife having prematurely aged, presumably through stress and worry for her husband, his roulette

mania and their financial situation. As if this was not warning enough, a few nights later Dostoevskii's psyche appears to send him the foreboding image of his father, appearing 'в таком ужасном виде', as if to consolidate the seriousness of the preceding dream's message: further gambling will lead to misery.

This time, happily, such warnings had their intended effect and Dostoevskii heeded their message. This was the last time he was to indulge in his vice, evident in his determined tone later in the letter when he makes a solemn vow to his wife:

> Надо мной великое дело совершилось, исчезла гнусная фантазия, *мучившая* меня почти 10 лет. Десять лет (или, лучше, с смерти брата, когда я был вдруг подавлен долгами) я всё мечтал выиграть. Мечтал серьезно, страстно. Теперь же всё кончено! Это был ВПОЛНЕ последний раз!' (29/1:199)

This latter passage also raises a likely cause for Mikhail's appearance in dreams to denote disaster. Due to the financial obligations Dostoevskii assumed following his brother's death, Mikhail may have come to symbolise the writer's need for money and, by extension, his gambling addiction, which almost always led to financial loss and great anxiety.

The only means by which Dostoevskii could ease his financial burden was his writing work, which in itself became a matter of concern and stress: the amount of torment involved in defining characters and plots for *Идиот*, evident in the writer's letters and drafts at the time, is proof of this. The rash contract Dostoevskii entered with the publisher Stellovskii to deliver *Игрок* while still working on *Преступление и наказание* was another cause for stress that led to anxiety dreams. In a letter to his friend Aleksandr Petrovich Miliukov on July 10-15, 1866, Dostoevskii writes: 'Стелловский беспокоит меня до мучения, даже вижу во сне.' (28/2:166)

The whole process of writing, in fact, seemed to take a certain toll on Dostoevskii. Perhaps the most extreme recorded example, besides in the writing of *Идиот* (a period that has, surprisingly, heralded no recorded anxiety dreams) is the time he spent in St Petersburg's Peter and Paul Fortress after his arrest in 1849 for colluding with the Petrashevskii circle. Dostoevskii's letters of this time, to his brother Mikhail, are remarkably calm. Yet they do document the harshness of the jail's conditions, the mental strain of writing there and consequent subconscious effects:

> Эта работа, особенно если она делается с охотою (а я никогда не работал так con amore, как теперь), всегда изнуряла меня, действуя на нервы. Когда я работал на свободе, мне нужно было беспрерывно прерывать себя развлечениями, а здесь волнение после письма должно проходить само собою. Здоровье мое хорошо, разве только геморрой да расстройство нервов, которое идет crescendo. У меня по временам стало захватывать горло, как прежде, аппетит очень небольшой, а сон очень малый, да и то, с сновидениями болезненными. Сплю я часов пять в сутки и раза по четыре в ночь просыпаюсь. Вот только это и тяжело. Всего тяжелее время, когда смеркается … Я иногда не сплю до часу, до двух заполночь. Так что часов пять темноты переносить очень тяжело. Это более всего расстроивает здоровье. (28/1:157)

It is clear that Dostoevskii's symptoms are due to a variety of causes: principally the conditions of his confined imprisonment, his already fragile health, lack of sleep, and the stresses of writing, or, as the case may be, not writing enough. The 'болезненные сновидения' he experiences, though not detailed, are undoubtedly ones of anxiety. More than a month later, his condition seems to have deteriorated:

> Вот уже целый месяц как я просто ем касторовое масло и тем только и пробиваюсь на свете. Геморрой мой ожесточился до последней степени, и я чувство грудную боль, которой прежде никогда не бывало. Да к тому же, особенно к ночи, усиливается впечатлительность, по ночам длинные, безобразные сны, и сверх того, с недавнего времени, мне всё кажется, что подо мной колышется пол, и я в моей комнате сижу, словно в пароходной каюте. Из всего этого я заключаю, что нервы мои расстроиваются. Когда такое нервное время находило на меня прежде, то я пользовался им, чтоб писать, – всегда в таком состоянии напишешь лучше и больше, – но теперь воздерживаюсь, чтоб не доканать себя окончательно. (28/1:159)

His 'безобразные' anxiety dreams are now accompanied by what may be dizziness, or even a hallucination of the floor swaying due to ill health and malnutrition.[316] In such a state, Dostoevskii confesses, the stresses of writing would kill him.

A last example is perhaps needed to underline the role of his work as a source of anxiety dreams. In this case it is as the role of public speaker, just days before he is to give his famous Pushkin address in Moscow in 1880: 'Время идет, а мне мешают. … Сплю нехорошо, во сне вижу только кошмары. Боюся в день

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[316] See chapter 3 – 'Dostoevskii'.

открытия простудиться и кашлять на чтении.' (30/1:170) Such nightmares are probably a result of anxiety over speaking to such a large, expectant audience and the separation from his wife. But there is also a sense of excitement over the impending occasion, a sense that Dostoevskii seems to predestine its importance in his life. This is again hinted at in his dreams of the time: in a prior letter to Anna Grigor'evna he writes, 'вижу странные и знаменательные сны по ночам.' (30/1:162)

It should be noted that in examining Dostoevskii's recorded dreams, an element of caution must be employed – particularly when they are recounted excitably in correspondence and not just in notebooks, where there was little need for exaggeration or fabrication. The most suspicious example of a dream account is, on first view, a fascinating, detailed episode written in a letter of April/May 1871 to his niece Sonia Ivanova, which seemed to predict the death of his aunt A. F. Kumanina.

> Какой я видел сон недели за три до кончины тетки: я вхожу будто к ним в залу; все сидят, и тут будто моя мать-покойница. Много гостей и большой пир. Я говорю с теткой и вдруг вижу, что в больших стенных часах маятник вдруг остановился. Я и говорю: это, верно, зацепилось за что-нибудь, не может быть, чтоб так вдруг встал, подошел к часам и толкнул опять маятник пальцем; он чикнул раз-два-три и вдруг опять остановился. Тут я проснулся и записал сон.
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> Вечером у одной знакомой (Висковатовой) рассказываю. Она мне и говорит: напишите справьтесь, не случилось ли чего-нибудь? И вот и вправду тетка умерла, маятник остановился. (29/1:209)

If we are to believe the author's claim that he had had this dream three weeks previous to Kumanina's death, it could almost be described as prophetic. However, one must be careful here to verify any claim of premonition. Because the letter is written a month after his aunt's death, it is difficult to prove that Dostoevskii's account – of an apparent dream he had almost two months ago – has not been embellished or modified to a great degree. It may even have taken place after his aunt's death and has been exaggerated in this account, or – more harshly – it is a complete construct of Dostoevskii's, designed to fire his niece's imagination. His other warning dreams have a sense of immediacy about them. They were recorded soon after the event, and clearly seemed to upset the dreamer. The latter, however, seems just slightly too symbolically perfect and the time between dream and written

account too long for this recorded experience to hold much bearing. Certainly, its premise as a genuine, prescient warning dream seems decidedly unsteady.

The comparison of such warning dreams with those in Dostoevskii's works, however, is clear: many are just as vivid and detailed, and, indeed, comparisons can be drawn between experience and fiction. But, unusually, upon basic analysis, the influence between fictional and recorded dreams seems to work both ways here.

Dostoevskii's 1870 dream of his father's prognosis may have had some bearing on Vel'chaninov's last dream in *Вечный муж*, written the same year. While not immediately as threatening, the drawing room crowd and the illness of the dreamer are parallels, as is the fact that a threat to life is carried over to reality immediately afterwards: for Dostoevskii the 'точка, как бы в орех величной'; for Vel'chaninov the razor attack by Trusotskii.

Working the other way, the author's blood-soaked dream of Mikhail (1879) and the terrifying warnings of following the same course in life that are inherent in Dostoevskii's Wiesbaden dreams (1871) would not seem out of place in Raskol'nikov's fevered images of *Преступление и наказание* (1866). At turns, the author's dreams and literature seem to inspire each other.

There is another isolated experience of Dostoevskii's that must be mentioned in discussing the influence of his anxiety dreams. He later set out the episode, which took place while he and Anna Grigor'evna lived in Florence in 1869, in his *Дневник писателя*:

> И вот раз, в июле месяце, в моей квартире, которую я нанимал от хозяев, случился переполох, – ко мне вдруг ворвались, с криками, две служанки, с хозяйкой во главе: видели, как сейчас только в мою комнату вбежала из коридора piccolo bestia, и ее надо было сыскать и истребить во что бы то ни стало. Piccolo bestia – это тарантул. И вот пустились искать под стульями, под столами, по всем углам, в мебели, начали выметать из-под шкапов, принялись топать ногами, чтоб испугать его и тем выманить; наконец, бросились в спальню, начали искать под кроватью, в кровати, в белье и… не нашли. Его сыскали лишь на другой день поутру, когда выметали комнату, и, уж конечно, сейчас же казнили, но зато перед этим ночь мне все-таки пришлось провести в моей постели с чрезвычайно неприятным сознанием, что в комнате, вмест со мною, ночует и piccolo bestia. Укушение тарантула, говорят, редко бывает смертельно … Большею же частию отделываются горячкой или просто лихорадочными

> припадками … не знаю, не медик, а все-таки ночевать было жутко. […] потом заснул. Но сны были решительно нехорошие. Тарантул не снился вовсе, но снилось что-то другое, пренеприятное, тяжелое, кошмарное, с частыми пробуждениями, и только поутру, когда встало солнце, я заснул лучше. (23:106-107)

There is little doubt that this incident is linked to the recurring motif of spiders or reptiles as a symbol of evil or despair in Dostoevskii's later works; indeed, it is even used before, as early as *Записки из мертвого дома*, to describe the monstrous convict Gazin; and in *Униженные и оскорбленные*, in which Prince Valkovskii is described as 'гад, какой-то огромный паук' (3:358). Indeed, the episode of the *piccolo bestia* seems to be a curious real-life echo of Ippolit's bed-ridden, delirious hallucinations of 'огромный и отвратительный тарантул', 'это глухое, темное и немое существо' (8:340) which he equates to nature's tyranny over man.

Perhaps it is this coincidence that leads Dostoevskii, who can easily be forgiven for spending a restless night in the same room as an escaped tarantula, to continue using the spider as a symbol of anxiety and evil in his remaining works – a symbol that is consistently tied with subconscious experience.

For example, it is associated with Stavrogin, most notably the 'крошечный красненький паучок' (11:22) that triggers his recollections and hallucinations of Matresha. The symbol also arises in the possibility of a future for Stavrogin and Liza together. In an echo of Ippolit's spider vision, Liza says: 'Мне всегда казалось, что вы заведете меня в какое-нибудь место, где живет огромный злой паук в человеческий рост, и мы там всю жизнь будем на него глядеть и его бояться. В том и пройдет наша взаимная любовь.' (10:402) In *Подросток* Arkadii Dolgorukii is convinced that 'во мне была душа паука' (13:306) after his erotic dream of Katerina Akhmakova, and later Prince Sergei, in a delirious state in prison, says: 'Мне всё пауки снятся!' (13:334). Also, Dmitrii Karamazov tells Alesha:

> Раз, брат, меня фаланга укусила, я две недели от нее в жару пролежал; ну так вот и теперь вдруг за сердце, слышу, укусила фаланга, злое-то насекомое, понимаешь? […] эта мысль, мысль фаланги, до такой степени захватила мне сердце, что оно чуть не истекло от одного томления. […] именно бы поступить как клопу, как злому тарантулу, безо всякого сожаления… (14:105)

The spider or tarantula for Dostoevskii seems to represent the darker side of man; it is rarely seen in physical form in the text, but is buried in the subconscious, in a

grotesquely imaginative or metaphorical form. It seems likely that the anxiety dreams Dostoevskii experienced in his Florence bedroom, though not described, were potent enough to make him increasingly use this symbol in his works: the influence one unseen spider, an 'evil insect', can have on a man in a room displays the power of subconscious fear. Again, this is related to existential fear, *мистический ужас*, in the dread of being bitten by a poisonous insect.

However, perhaps the most direct link that can be established between fictional dream and the author's experience is Dostoevskii's inspiration for Raskol'nikov's dream of the beaten mare. It is directly linked to Dostoevskii's 'первое личное оскорбление' (7:138), the 'courier incident' that was witnessed at a posting station on Fedor and Mikhail's first journey to St Petersburg. There is consequently a strong, personal, emotional investment in Raskol'nikov's dream for the author. While the scene was witnessed in reality and not subconsciously, its symbolism resonated within the author for practically the rest of his life. Almost 40 years later, Dostoevskii wrote: 'Эта отвратительная картинка осталась в воспоминаниях моих на всю жизнь' (22:29). This is largely because this scene marked a loss of innocence, much like the child Raskol'nikov in his witnessing of the beaten horse.

Louis Breger reads even greater significance into this episode, seeing it as a 'nodal point' in Dostoevskii's life, 'radiating out in many directions.

> One connection is with the concurrent events: his mother's death, his father's coercive control of his education. Other paths extend back into his childhood and forward to the numerous 'personal insults' of his adult life. Of special importance is the way the scene-memory contains, in highly condensed form, many of the themes that will be elaborated in the great novels: the clash of romantic ideals with harsh reality; man's capacity for violence and cruelty, along with feelings of love and sympathy; the effect of tyrannical authority on the oppressed and the victim's identification with their oppressors.[317]

Taken on a wider scale, the scene also raises the issue of subjugation in Russia at this time, before the emancipation of the serfs. It is symbolic of the heartless, impersonal hierarchy of tsarism, of St Petersburg's class divides mentioned previously, and how dreams of individuals can be warped by the need to find a place in such a society. In

[317] Breger, p. 3

Дневник писателя Dostoevskii gives such comment on this nightmarish image of authoritarian rule, by attempting to divine the psychology of the courier:

> Этот фельдъегерь был, разумеется, по рождению русский, но до того ослепший и оторвавшийся от народа, что не мог иначе и объясняться с русским человеком, как своим огромным кулачищем вместо всякого разговора. А, между тем, ведь он всю жизнь свою провел с ямщиками и с разным русским народом. Но фалдочки его мундира, шляпа с пером, его офицерский чин, его вычищенные петербургские сапоги ему были дороже, душевно и духовно, не только русского мужика, но, может быть, и всей России […] Ему вся Россия представлялась лишь в его начальстве, а всё, что кроме начальства, почти недостойно было существовать. Как такой может понимать суть народа и душу его! Это был хоть и русский, но уже и «европейский» русский, только начавший свой европеизм не с просвещения, а с разврата, как и многие, чрезвычайно многие начинали. (26:155-156)

It is clear from this passage that this image continued to exert an influence on Dostoevskii right until the end of his life. In this passage, almost 40 years after the scene was witnessed, he blames European values as a major cause of the courier's behaviour, in line with his increasingly anti-European outlook in his later years. In an earlier entry in his *Дневник* he uses the image of the courier to discuss the contemporary maladies of the state. Despite the emancipation of the serfs, violence towards and among peasants remains, as does its root causes.

> Я никогда не мог забыть фельдъегеря и многое позорное и жестокое в русском народе как-то поневоле и долго потом наклонен был объяснять уж, конечно, слишком односторонне. […] Картинка эта являлась, так сказать, как эмблема, как нечто чрезвычайно наглядно выставлявшее связь причины с ее последствием. Тут каждый удар по скоту, так сказать, сам собою, выскакивал из каждого удара по человеку. […]
>
> […] теперь не сорок лет назад, и курьеры не бьют народ, а народ, уже сам себя бьет, удержав розги на своем суде. Не в этом и дело, а в причинах, ведущих за собою следствия. Нет фельдъегеря, зато есть «зелено-вино». (22:29)

As difficult as it may have been to admit for a believer in the Russian *народ* as a God-bearing race, Dostoevskii cannot seem to escape the notion that such brutalism exhibited by courier and peasants alike is an inherent Russian trait. Not only is this evident in Dostoevskii's non-fiction – and here we can include the many ordinary peasants-turned-murderers in *Записки из мертвого дома* – but also in Mikolka's

slaying of his horse, 'мое добро!' Even Dostoevskii's embodiment of inherent goodness in the Russian peasantry, his father's muzhik Marei who appeared to him in that moment of inspirational illumination in the Siberian prison camp, is not innocent of this inherent Russian brutality. One notebook passage from 1876, which echoes the actions of Mikolka, reads: 'Марей. Он любит свою кобыленку и зовет ее кормилицей. Если же есть в нем минуты нетерпения и прорывается в нем татарин и начнет он хлестать свою завязшую в грязи с возом кормилицу кнутом по глазам, то вспомните про фельдъегеря, тут: воспитание, привычки, воспоминания, зелено вино'[318].

Ivan Karamazov relates a similar scene of a horse being beaten 'по кротким глазам' and starkly states, 'это русизм' (14:219). This would seem like another example of Ivan's cold logic, his denial of spirituality, if we did not know of Dostoevskii's powerful testaments to the underlying brutality of contemporary Russia. In addition, Dostoevskii seems to associate with every character in the courier scene – even the superior courier himself, as Dostoevskii grew up in a household with servants – much as Raskol'nikov can be linked to different figures in his dream.

Another interesting point to be noted in the dream of the beaten mare is the presence of Raskol'nikov's father, who does nothing to stop the slaughter of the horse. It is partly this *laissez-faire* attitude among the witnesses to the scene, and particularly his father, that distresses the young Raskol'nikov so much. His appearance in the dream – the only occurrence in the novel when we are invited to 'visualise' him – can be construed as a dark omen much in the same way that Dostoevskii treated appearances of his own father in his own dreams. Raskol'nikov's dream certainly forebodes disaster, and his father plays a central role. His single influential action is that of dragging his child away from the dead horse, symbolically removing its sole protector, the sole champion of its 'meekness'. Yet his passivity speaks even louder volumes. Why, for instance, does he stop to allow his son to witness such a traumatic scene? The young boy witnesses every cruel blow in this symbolic loss of innocence. Even when they do move on, his father's passivity continues in his lack of answers to

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[318] *Литературное наследство*, 83, p. 416

Raskol'nikov's demands for an explanation of the peasants' actions. Perhaps there is no answer to this 'русизм'; but not even an attempt is made to placate the child.

Again, similarities can be drawn to Dostoevskii's own position. The author may have subconsciously felt as if he was 'forced' to witness the scene of the courier and thus have his innocence placed under threat, as his father was forcing him and his brother to enrol at engineering college at the end of their journey to St Petersburg. Dostoevskii's father, too, offered very little explanation or reassurance regarding the harsh realities of life. Through this authoritative parenting, Dostoevskii, posits Breger, 'was being abused and insulted psychologically and could do nothing about it. He was filled with anger that he could not directly express at the authority who was running his life, as the courier ran his driver, and this reinforced his identification with the scene.'[319]

Tat'iana Kasatkina has equated the figure of Raskol'nikov's father to God, much in the way as a young child looks to his parent as its protector and guardian. As a result, the scene of the beaten mare, which his father does nothing to stop, symbolises his loss of faith: 'Это момент, в который он теряет веру в могущество отца и способность его устроить так, чтобы страдания не было. Это момент, в который он теряет Бога.'[320] The very fact his father allows the child to witness the scene echoes many a doubter's argument that God allows such brutality to happen. The dangerous extension of this theory for Raskol'nikov is that, upon his father's death, he, as the new head of the family, is then elevated to the status of God: 'Смерть отца делает Раскольникова «единственным упованием и надеждой» его сестры и матери, он теперь «их все» – т. е. вершитель их судеб, тот, для кого всем жертвуют, но потому, что на него лишь и надеются.'[321] This, then, consequently informs Raskol'nikov's belief in his ability to fulfil his role as a 'Napoleon', a god, because to a certain degree he already is one.

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[319] Ibid., p. 62
[320] Касаткина, p. 83
[321] Ibid., pp. 83-84

It must also be noted that the episode of the beaten mare is the only detailed dream in Dostoevskii's entire canon to feature the dreamer's biological father.[322] It is his only literary dream, therefore, in which he effectively places his own ultimate bad subconscious omen. This alone is testament to its great significance as a dream of anxiety and, principally, warning. In laying bare varying aspects of Raskol'nikov's character, it also offers an insight into Dostoevskii's.

Dreams detailing catharsis, resolution or peripeteia are some of the most striking in Dostoevskii's work, yet the recorded dreams that he experienced do not seem as clear cut as the often epic visions of his prose. Dreams in this case are used as more of a stylistic plot device, and there is a less definable line of influence from the textual dream to the author's dream.

However, two of Dostoevskii's recorded dreams can be seen to represent turning points in his life. The first is an unusually symbolic dream for Dostoevskii, dated sometime in 1860. He writes to an unknown addressee:

> Объясните мне мой сон, я у всех спрашивал; никто не знает: на Востоке видна была полная луна, которая расходилась на три части и сходилась три раза.
>
> [There follows a hand-drawn diagram of a circle, then of three crescents arranged pointing inwards at 0, 90 and 270 degrees]
>
> Потом из луны вышел щит (на щите два раза написано «да, да» старинными церковными буквами),
>
> [There follows a diagram of shield with 'дада' shakily written on it]
>
> который прошел всё небо, от востока на запад и скрылся за горизонтом. Щит и буквы осиянные. (30/1:244)

Such symbolic images are a psychoanalytic feast; which effectively means that, at best, their meaning can only be guessed at. It could be suggested, however, that the dream as a whole symbolises Dostoevskii's return to European Russia from exile in the 1850s, and affirms the newfound outlook on life gained from his experiences in Siberia, and that his life is now heading in the right direction.

The shield emerging from the moon indicates that Dostoevskii's psyche is affirming his role as a future 'defender' of Slavic Christian nationhood. The Church Slavonic

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[322] Arkadii Dolgorukii's dreams of Versilov are the only other examples, and these are only mentioned in passing.

letters on the shield add to this theory, and even the moon, split into crescents and coming from the east, could be taken to represent 'hostile' Islam. The message 'да да' further affirms this role; and the shield's movement, across the sky from east to west, may be showing the direction Dostoevskii must take his message – or indeed, defend his homeland from: i.e. Europe. Rice, linking the moon to the author's possible preoccupation with its influence on his epilepsy, states that 'it added an insistent new complexity and anxiety to the problems of identity, destiny, and mortality.'[323]

This is of course, speculation, and deciphering the dream's meaning is in no way helped by its vague date and lack of addressee. However, 1860 was a huge turning point in Dostoevskii's life: he was re-immersing himself in the literary world, starting his 'second phase' of work, with the aim of writing works he hoped could match his newfound convictions. Such a time of hope, it seems, is mirrored in this dream. Despite its effect on the dreamer being another missing piece of the puzzle – although Dostoevskii's direct request for interpretation betrays his excitement over the possible message – it appears to show his psyche making sense of these hopes.

The second recorded 'turning point' dream must also be treated with some caution, as it is difficult to ascertain whether it had been dreamed at all. It is related in Anna Grigor'evna's *Воспоминания* and is told to her by a visibly excited Dostoevskii, who is minutes away from proposing to her:

> Видите этот большой палисандровый ящик? … В нем я храню мои рукописи, письма и вещи, дорогие мне по воспоминаниям. Так вот, вижу я во сне, что сижу перед этим ящиком и разбираю бумаги. Вдруг между ними что-то блеснуло, какая-то светлая звездочка. Я перебираю бумаги, а звездочка то появляется, то исчезает. Это меня заинтриговало: я стал медленно перекладывать бумаги и между ними нашел крошечный брильянтик, но очень яркий и сверкающий.

He then adds: 'Тут пошли другие сны, и я не знаю, что с ним сталось. Но то был хороший сон!'[324]

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[323] Rice, p. 71. Rice adds: 'On the most obvious level it bespeaks the self-exalting integration of an ego threatened and fragmented by fear (of chronic epileptic seizures)' – but this is far from 'obvious' in my mind.

[324] Достоевская, *Воспоминания*, p. 75

This would seem like a relatively straightforward recording of a dream, were it not for the immediate circumstances: following his account of the dream, the writer then launches into what Anna calls a 'блестящая импровизация' about a new novel he is writing, which Anna soon recognises as the story of his life; he then works a marriage proposal into the story, which Anna accepts. Then, when Anna leaves Dostoevskii's apartment later that day, he stops her and says: 'Анна Григорьевна, а я ведь знаю теперь, куда девался брильянтик ... я наконец нашел его и намерен сохранить на всю жизнь.'[325]

This last statement confirms one of two things: that either Dostoevskii's dream was symbolically urging him to find this 'брильянтик' by resolving his feelings for Anna; or the whole retelling of this dream was but a highly imaginative prelude and coda to his inspired proposal. A third solution perhaps exists: that Dostoevskii did in fact dream this dream, but many nights previously, and, in pondering over its meaning, helped him to construct his proposal. There is no doubt feelings between the pair had developed during their time working together; but perhaps it took this dream to make Dostoevskii realise what he had to do. If so, the dream of the diamond is an extremely important subconscious event in the writer's life, inspiring him to marry the woman who would unstintingly love him, tolerate his vices and organise his domestic affairs until his death.

There is no recorded evidence of Dostoevskii ever experiencing an epic dream of 'Golden Age' proportions. It is safe to say that the dreams of Stavrogin, Versilov and the Ridiculous Man were purely fictional constructs through which Dostoevskii intended to display his message of the universal path human psychology takes without God: striving for the ideal society and then warping this ideal through individual egoism.

It is, though, perhaps worth noting that much of the inspiration for the Golden Age came not from a *сон* but a *мечта* instead: Dostoevskii's *мечта* of a utopian society which stretches back to his pre-Siberian involvement in revolutionary circles. It is often forgotten that, in an 'explanation' (*объяснение*) he was made to write by the secret police after his arrest in 1849, he defended the theories of the radical utopian

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[325] Ibid., p. 80

Charles Fourier. Although he ultimately denounced these ideas as impractical, he maintained they were, at heart, peaceful and loving aims to create a better society:

> Фурьеризм система мирная; она очаровывает душу своей изящностью, обольщает сердце тою любовью к человечеству, которая воодушевляла Фурье, когда он составлял свою систему, и удивляет ум своею стройностью. Привлекает к себе она не жолчными нападками, а воодушевляя любовью к человечеству. В системе этой нет ненавистей.[326]

It seems clear from this passage alone that from an early point in his life Dostoevskii had always believed in the *мечта* of the Golden Age, albeit through the more political aims of Fourierism.[327] His Siberian 'conversion' later modified this ideal to revolve around Christ as a uniting force of the Russian *народ*. It is therefore absolutely no surprise that he was to give this ideal such a powerful presence in his later works.

Versilov's dream of the Golden Age shows this most clearly, in the absence of God in man and its implications. Dostoevskii's notebook sketch makes this even more apparent; and, interestingly, it still contains extended traces of sentiment for the *fraternité* and philanthropy espoused by Fourierism and the other utopian movements of Dostoevskii's youth. Picturing the aftermath of the reason's victory over religion, Versilov portrays mankind's reaction to their newfound 'orphanhood':

> Одинокие и сироты, они тотчас же прижались бы друг к другу теснее и любовнее, они схватились бы за руки и поняли бы, что теперь лишь они одни составляют все друг для друга. Исчезла бы великая идея бессмертия и приходилось бы заменять ее, и весь избыток великий прежней любви к тому, которого оставили, обратился бы у всех на природу, на мир, на людей, на всякую былинку. Они возлюбили бы землю и жизнь особою, уже не прежнею любовью; они заметили бы и открыли в природе такие явления и тайны, каких и не предполагали прежде, ибо смотрели бы на природу, как любовники на возлюбленную, а не с одним только ножом как прежде ради барышей, утилитаризма и только любопытства. Они просыпались бы и целовали друг друга, торопясь любить, каждый сознавая, что дни его коротки и что это все, что есть у него. Они работали бы друг на друга, и каждый отдавал бы

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[326] In Н. Ф. Бельчиков, *Достоевский в процессе петрашевцев*, Наука, Москва, 1971, p. 91

[327] However, in his 'explanation', Dostoevskii wrote: 'Реформы политической фурьеризм не полагает; его реформа – экономическая. Она не посягает ни на правительство, ни на собственность' (Бельчиков, p. 91) – making clear that Fourierism was no threat to the tsarist system.

> всем все свое и тем был бы счастлив. Каждый ребенок знал бы и чувствовал, что всякий встречный человек кругом него ему и мать и отец. Пусть завтра последний день мой, думал бы каждый, смотря на заходящее солнце, но все равно, я умру, но останутся все они, а после них дети их – и одна мысль, что они останутся все так же любя и трепеща друг за друга, заменила бы мысль о загробной встрече. – Пусть я умру без следа, но останется в них память о том, что я жил и любил их, а когда прейдут и они, а настанут совсем другие, то и тысячелетия спустя будут помнить новые люди об нас всех, прежде живших, что мы жили и любили их раньше, чем они пришли на свет, и желали бы видеть их счастье. И пусть под конец кончится вся земля и потухнет солнце, но все же где-нибудь останется мысль, что все это было *и послужило чем-то* всему – и люди полюбили бы эту мечту.[328]

Versilov recognises that a goodness exists in man with or without religion and so too, by extension, does Dostoevskii. This is yet another fundamental message of the subconscious image of the Golden Age. There is even a goodness inside Stavrogin, that most cold and impassive character, because he subconsciously *witnesses* goodness, harmony and peace.

However, all the while, in Versilov's notebook account, there are overtones of hollowness, of something missing, and of a worrying lack of time:

> О, они торопилися бы любить, но чем далее, тем, думаю, становились бы все грустней. Они были бы горды и сильны за себя, но сделалися бы робкими друг за друга. […] Встречаясь, смотрели бы друг на друга глубоким и осмысленным взглядом, и в взглядах их была бы любовь и грусть. И каждый трепетал бы за жизнь и за счастье каждого.

Ultimately – and this is certainly Dostoevskii's view – Christ will return for mankind and humanity will once again embrace him:

> О, я не могу вообразить людей *без Него*, мой милый! Раз Он был, и Он не может уйти. А если б ушел, они бы сами нашли Его. Я воображаю, Он стал бы посреди всех людей, простирая руки, и сказал бы им: но как же могли вы позабыть Его? И повел бы их к Нему. И как бы пелена упала со всех глаз, и раздался бы крик восторга и счастья по всей земле и все бы воскресли в новую и бесконечную уже любовь.[329]

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[328] In A. C. Долинин (ed.), *Литературное наследство*, 77, *Ф. М. Достоевский в работе над романом «Подросток»*, Наука, Москва, 1965, p. 432-33
[329] Ibid., p. 433

Dostoevskii's belief in Orthodox Christianity was never in doubt in his later years. But it is interesting to note from these passages that his old ideals still held sway, even if they were significantly toned down for the novel. A first-hand account of this ambiguity comes from an acquaintance, the writer L. Kh. Simonova-Khokhriakova, who, on praising the idea of Versilov's vision of a humanistic Golden Age, was met with Dostoevskii's reply: 'Да, мне бы хотелось, чтобы они были такими, но это мечта. Они без Бога перегрызут горло друг друга, и больше ничего.'[330] Frank points out 'the note almost of regret with which he speaks of the impossibility of its realization. Without God (and Christ), such idealism, he was persuaded, could not by itself conquer the powerful forces of egoism in the human breast.'[331]

Perhaps the only other way of beginning to approach such a 'Golden Age' without Christ was through the very phenomenon of dreams, or art. Jackson writes:

> The dream, then, as a psychic phenomenon, constitutes for Dostoevsky the area in which man's temporal, earthly existence merges with its timeless meaning, where the finite flows into the infinite world of experience and striving. It is at this point that reality is at once most total and most protean, a continuously contracting and expanding universe in which the notions of past and future, time and space acquire a non-Euclidean, relativistic, 'fantastic' character. Only art … Dostoevsky suggests, can reincarnate anew this imagic fantasy. Art in this sense is by its very nature fantastic, that is, free to explore man's total reality.[332]

It is also worth noting that Dostoevskii once saw signs of the ideal of the Russian *народ* uniting under Christ and spreading the Orthodox Christian message coming together in reality. Frank writes that, for Dostoevskii, 'the Russian people possess not only all the virtues already attributed to them but also the capacity to create a new Christian world order in the future. Indeed, this was the basis on which Dostoevsky believed that the people and the educated class could finally be united.'[333]

The *Дневник писателя* of January 1877 writes of the possible consequences of a war with the Ottoman Empire. It would be such an event, the author surmised, that would unite the people of Russia in a single cause, 'на спасение и на возрождение угнетенных племен' of Serbia and Montenegro, then already at war with the Turks.

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[330] In Тюнькин (ed.), *Ф. М. Достоевский в воспоминаниях современников*, 2, p. 345
[331] Frank, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, p. 221
[332] Jackson, *The Art of Dostoevsky*, pp. 293-94
[333] Frank, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, p. 262

In turn, Dostoevskii prophesies that a union of a victorious Russia with its Slavic brothers would enable the country to fulfil its ‘предназначение’ by bringing peace and salvation to Europe:

> она [Russia] не бросится на Европу с мечом, не захватит и не отнимет у ней ничего, как бы непременно сделала Европа, если б нашла возможность вновь соединиться вся против России, и как делали в Европе все нации, во всю жизнь свою […] мы не только ничего не захватим у них и не только ничего не отнимем, но именно тем самым обстоятельством, что чрезмерно усилимся […] тем самым и получим наконец возможность не обнажать меча, а, напротив, в спокойствии силы своей явить собою пример уже искреннего мира, международного всеединения и бескорыстия. Мы первые объявим миру, что не чрез подавление личностей иноплеменных нам национальностей хотим мы достигнуть собственного преуспеяния, а, напротив, видим его лишь в свободнейшем и самостоятельнейшем развитии всех других наций и в братском единении с ними, восполняясь одна другою, прививая к себе их органические особенности и уделяя им и от себя ветви для прививки, сообщаясь с ними душой и духом, учась у них и уча их, и так до тех пор, когда человечество, восполнясь мировым общением народов до всеобщего единства, как великое и великолепное древо, осенит собою счастливую землю. […] Да, мы тут, именно в теперешней же войне, и докажем всю нашу идею о будущем предназначении России в Европе. (25:99-100)

Such a ‘мировое общение народов’, would, in other words, usher in a Golden Age of humanity. Such open assimilation, sharing and learning, is prevalent in ‘Сон смешного человека’, which, indeed, follows a few pages later in the same issue of the *Дневник*.

6. EPILEPSY

Epilepsy is an illness that has been recognised for centuries but remains burdened by common misconceptions. Historically linked to both heaven and hell – the disease was known in ancient times as both the *morbus sacer* and the 'wrath of the gods', and was connected to the demonic St Vitus' Dance – and often misdiagnosed or confused with other illnesses or equated with madness, 'падучая болезнь', as it was known in Dostoevskii's time, remains medically enigmatic, and certainly incurable (if controllable), to this day.

Dostoevskii is regarded as one of the most famous epileptics of history, a claim he shares with Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Napoleon, Newton, Peter the Great, Petrarch, Plutarch and, on a more literary bent, Byron, Dickens, Flaubert, Molière and Shakespeare – all of whom at least exhibited symptoms that strongly suggested epilepsy. Even the Islamic prophet Mohammed has been identified as a possible epileptic, a theory that Dostoevskii himself hints at in his passages on the disease's effects. With such an all-consuming condition that dictates one's life, yet still allows a sense of intermittent normality, it is little wonder epileptics are keen students of the history and science behind their own disease. Dostoevskii was a case in point and, moreover, the symptoms of epilepsy are a common feature of his work, even though they may be obscured or are not directly attributed to the illness.

The condition of epilepsy has three major sequential stages which are of interest in yielding subconscious phenomena. In order to better gauge their relative subconscious intensity, it is convenient to view them as the three stages of a wave. At its increasing rise, epileptics can experience premonitory moods of foreboding known as the prodrome, during which dreamlike sensations, detachedness and confusion are common. These build in intensity up until the point of seizure: this is the crest of the wave. Immediately beforehand, the 'aura' – an intense burst of subconscious activity – is experienced. Following the seizure, exhaustion can be coupled with post-ictal (post-fit) feelings of deep depression, more detached confusion, and, in extreme cases like that of Prince Myshkin, a state of 'idiocy' in which the mind almost seems to shut down. This can in fact be a direct continuation of behaviour following on from minor seizures in temporal lobe epilepsy (the type

attributed to Dostoevskii), in which 'the patient engages in compulsive, repetitive, simple behaviours commonly referred to as automatisms (e.g., doing and undoing a button) or in more complex behaviours that appear almost normal.'[334]

These three stages – the prodrome, seizure (plus aura), and post-ictal state – form a successive wave-pattern that imposes itself on the epileptic's life. Of course, the pattern can be erratic: the duration of the prodrome can range from a matter of minutes to even a few days; it can take another few days or even weeks for the body and mind to recover from a fit, and in cases of 'idiocy' even longer; the seizure itself can last from a couple of minutes to hours; and the periods between these epileptic phenomena can range from a week to months on end. It must also be noted, however, that during the 'troughs' of these waves, 'inter-ictal' phenomena have been identified, such as extreme anxiety, delusions and personality changes, all of which can be almost schizophrenic in character.[335]

The aura is the most fascinating, and certainly the most powerful subconscious experience associated with epilepsy, equating to a powerful burst of dream energy that overloads the brain, resulting in seizure. It can manifest itself as a smell, a sound or a vision, or simply as intense feeling, and is most commonly a negative sensation.

> Usually lasting only seconds or a few minutes at most, these events are reported as negative in most patients: depression, fear, confusion, rage, paranoia, visceral sensations, bad smells or tastes. Experience of intense unreality, strangeness, or déjà vu are also common, particularly in temporal lobe epilepsy. These effects may combine with auditory or visual hallucinations in succinct scenarios that impose themselves against the will, or in odd vignettes that tend to repeat themselves …. Extremely rare but not unknown in medical literature is ecstatic or pleasurable aura.[336]

Such 'ecstatic' auras[337] are said to bestow intense feelings of harmony, or even spirituality:

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[334] Pinel, pp. 138-39. The wave analogy is my own.
[335] See Kolb and Whishaw, pp. 587-89; Pinel, pp. 248-49; and Rosenzweig, Breedlove & Leiman, p. 74
[336] Rice, p. 83
[337] For a modern attested case, see F. C. V. Todesco Cirignotta & E. Lugaresi, 'Temporal Lobe Epilepsy with Ecstatic Seizures (So-Called Dostoevsky Epilepsy),' *Epilepsia*, 1980, vol. 21, pp. 705-10. See also Rice, pp. 10, 49

> They [Patients] may say, for example, that they felt a gathering awe and dread or that they felt a huge deluge of emotions. A handful say that their rather indescribable experiences made them feel that they were connected with an overwhelmingly powerful being, that they felt a great presence nearby. Some say that during the seizure, they came in intimate contact with an invisible God.[338]

These extraordinarily intense sensations place the epileptic aura – despite the brevity of experience – at the 'deepest' level of subconscious imagery for the purpose of this thesis.

In addition, the general condition of epilepsy, including prodromal, post-ictal and inter-ictal phases, unites many other interesting subconscious phenomena already discussed: for example, dreamlike states and morbid fear. The former was clinically attested ever since a classic study on epilepsy by Dr John Hughlings Jackson in 1876[339], which also showed that epileptics were strongly disposed towards bouts of *déjà vu* and *jamais vu*. Jackson also noted the strange phenomenon of the epileptic being objectively aware of his or her own odd behaviour during such dreamlike states. Other studies even reveal cases showing how such a dreamlike state became established as a permanent condition,[340] with patients becoming trapped in the 'continuity hypothesis' of dreamlike behaviour.

The dreamlike episodes of the pre- and post-ictal stages are also common symptoms in lesser seizures, such as partial seizures and generalised *petit mal* fits – as opposed to the classic *grand mal* fits, in which the whole body is afflicted with convulsions. The more benign *petit mal* fits have been found to be most common in children and often cease at puberty. 'They often go undiagnosed; thus children with petit mal epilepsy are sometimes considered to be "daydreamers"'[341]. However, it has also been shown that *petit mal* seizures in adulthood also lead to more psychiatric inter-ictal problems, including sudden outbursts of violence, polar mood swings and

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[338] Patricia Smith Churchland, *Brain-Wise: Studies in Neurophilosophy*, MIT Press, Cambridge MA, 2002, p. 385
[339] 'On the scientific and empirical investigation of epilepsies', *Medical Press and Circular*, 1, 1876. For a synopsis of Jackson's work, see Anne Harrington, *Medicine, Mind, and the Double Brain – A study in nineteenth-century thought*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1987, pp. 232-33
[340] Arnold Pick, 'On "dreamy mental states" as a permanent condition in epileptics', *Brain*, 26, pp. 242-51; again, see Harrington, p. 233
[341] Pinel, p. 249

personality change. Some scientists have even linked such phenomena in temporal lobe epilepsy to a large percentage of habitually aggressive criminals.[342]

Other inter-ictal symptoms of temporal lobe epilepsy have been connected specifically to Dostoevskii by scientists: 'Clinicians have long known that a small percentage of subjects with an epileptic focus in the temporal lobe are prone to be hyperreligious. These same subjects may also show hypersexuality and hypergraphia (they tend to write an unusual amount). Dostoyevsky is sometimes cited as one such case'[343]. In addition, depression, paranoia and sudden mood swings were common features of Dostoevskii's life. These are certainly symptoms of damage to the temporal lobe of the brain, which is 'intimately involved in the experience of emotion as well as playing its role in memory and perception. Like many temporal-lobe epileptics, Dostoevsky experienced intense fluctuations of feeling, along with unusual sensory and perceptual states.'[344] The author's doctor in the 1840s, Stepan Ianovskii, undertook a detailed investigation of all of his symptoms and, James Rice attests, concluded that 'he suffered from a periodic depressive and paranoid disorder. In the doctor's opinion these psychiatric problems were unquestionably epiphenomena of the patient's epilepsy.'[345]

Epilepsy, then, is a vastly complex illness that manifests a wide range of symptoms. In fact, it could be said to have an effect on every preceding type of subconscious phenomena discussed in this thesis. Certainly, its effect on Dostoevskii, as with any other epileptic, was all-encompassing. As such, it would be remiss to focus any examination of imagery of the subconscious resulting from epilepsy purely on the aura, as fascinating as that aspect may be. Therefore, following an examination of imagery arising from the aura in Dostoevskii – as previously noted, the 'deepest' subconscious experience examined in this thesis – the subconscious phenomena of each preceding chapter will be examined in the light of all three stages of the wave-

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[342] V. H. Mark and F. R. Ervin, *Violence and the Brain*, Harper & Row, New York, 1970; A. V. Delgado-Escueta, R. H. Mattson, L. King, E. S. Goldensohn, et al. 'The nature of aggression during epileptic seizures,' *New England Journal of Medicine*, 305, pp. 711-716; O. Devinsky and D. Bear, 'Varieties of aggressive behavior in temporal lobe epilepsy,' *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 141, pp. 651-656. See also Rosenzweig et al., p. 479
[343] Churchland, p. 385
[344] Breger, p. 242
[345] Rice, p. 15

pattern of epilepsy. This examination will focus almost exclusively on the novel *Идиот*, in which the entire span of different types of imagery covered by this thesis is present, more so than in any other of Dostoevskii's works.

Despite the uncertainty over the timing of the onset of Dostoevskii's epilepsy, it is apparent that the illness was to affect and influence almost all of the works of the author's later period – but *Идиот* most of all. Through the epileptic Prince Myshkin, Dostoevskii was able to describe the effects of this debilitating mental condition, which affected the entire composition of the novel itself: for the author suffered particularly frequent, debilitating attacks during its writing.

The aura

While the aura has been scientifically documented almost universally as a negative phenomenon, Dostoevskii's treatment of it is almost exclusively positive. He describes it as an almost mystical connectivity to life on this plane and others. The narrator of *Идиот* describes Myshkin's extraordinarily powerful sensations of the aura in striking detail, to the extent that, as in the digressive passages on dreams, the authorial voice takes command and details Dostoevskii's first-hand experience.

> В эпилептическом состоянии его была одна степень почти пред самым припадком (если только припадок приходил наяву), когда вдруг, среди грусти, душевного мрака, давления, мгновениями как бы воспламенялся его мозг и с необыкновенным порывом напрягались разом все жизненные силы его. Ощущение жизни, самосознание почти удесятерялось в эти мгновения, продолжавшиеся как молния. Ум, сердце озарялись необыкновенным светом; все волнения, все сомнения его, все беспокойства как бы умиротворялись разом, разрешались в какое-то высшее спокойствие, полное ясной, гармоничной радости и надежды, полное разума и окончательной причины. Но эти моменты, эти проблески были еще только предчувствием той окончательной секунды (никогда не более секунды), с которой начинался самый припадок. Эта секунда была, конечно, невыносима. […] он часто говорил сам себе: что ведь все эти молнии и проблески высшего самоощущения и самосознания, а стало быть и «высшего бытия», не что иное, как болезнь, как нарушение нормального состояния […] «Что же в том, что это болезнь? – решил он наконец. – Какое до того дело, что это напряжение ненормальное, если самый результат, если минута ощущения, припоминаемая и рассматриваемая уже в здоровом

> состоянии, оказывается в высшей степени гармонией, красотой, дает неслыханное и негаданное дотоле чувство полноты, меры, примирения и восторженного молитвенного слития с самым высшим синтезом жизни?» […] Ведь не видения же какие-нибудь снились ему в этот момент, как от хашиша, опиума или вина, унижающие рассудок и искажающие душу, ненормальные и несуществующие? […] Мгновения эти были именно одним только необыкновенным усилением самосознания […] и в то же время самоощущения в высшей степени непосредственного. Если в ту секунду […] ему случалось успевать ясно и сознательно сказать себе: «Да, за этот момент можно отдать всю жизнь!» – то, конечно, этот момент сам по себе и стоил всей жизни. (8:188-89)

In these transcendental moments of blissful, all-encompassing harmony, absolutely nothing else matters, making epilepsy seem like a blessing. These are incredibly intense episodes of subconscious power that cannot be adequately explained to those who have never experienced them. Indeed, the language of the passage is couched in sensation rather than vision, making it difficult to conceptualise. No amount of medical reading by Dostoevskii could have lent such vivid and almost personal detail to this passage – it exudes experience. Sensations count above words, this passage suggests, and Myshkin preaches this philosophy during the novel by valuing the pure, innocent, instinctual behaviour of the child above anything else.

Such descriptions give the reader greater insight into Myshkin's character. Such a moment, 'worth the whole of life', such an experience of absolute 'гармония, красота' has undoubtedly informed his outlook on life and his spiritual beliefs. Myshkin, through the descriptions of the narrator/Dostoevskii, clearly feels as if this ailment has been sent to him from God, and indeed, almost gives access to Him – Myshkin gleans an insight into 'окончательная причина' from these moments, and has absolutely no doubt that life is worth living in pursuit of such harmony. Life, he has seen, is inherently beautiful, and this is the message he tries to spread among his predominantly unworthy, materialistic peers of the St Petersburg set in *Идиот*.

It would seem that the ecstatic aura, at the 'deepest' level of imagery of the subconscious experienced, connects directly with mankind's 'collective unconscious', thus engendering such sensations of absolute connectedness and harmony: 'even as the seizures lift Myškin above the context of reality, they return him to a more primitive and meaningful context, unite him again with primordial

consciousness.'[346] Elizabeth Dalton, in her extensive analysis of *Идиот*, extends this idea by highlighting the entire novel's connection to subconscious material, saying that the text 'is like a shaft sunk vertically through the strata of psychic life'[347]. If so, the pool of collective human experience tapped during the ecstatic aura is at the very base of this shaft.

This means, however, that Myshkin's experience also has a negative side. In its all-consuming subconscious intensity, the visions of the aura leave Myshkin teetering on the edge of the psychological abyss. His joyful inter-connected communion with life, perversely, threatens to totally annihilate his personality by 'diluting' it, so to speak, in a collective harmony. Dalton writes:

> This is the ambiguity and the fundamental paradox of the moments of greatest intensity in the novel: the most piercing sense of the existence of the conscious self comes at the point of the destruction of personality, at the moment when the ego is about to give way and the mind to return to a primitive and undifferentiated mode of response. The moments of highest meaning in Myshkin's experience – the brilliant awareness of the texture of existence itself – are also the very moments when existence is on the verge of collapse into meaningless emptiness.[348]

Myshkin, then, experiences 'вся жизнь' to such an extreme in these moments that he experiences death as part of life. Rice calls this 'the *dialectic* of Dostoevsky's apperception, the ultimate *paradox*'.[349] Although 'harmony is purchased at the expense of reality'[350] at the moment of ecstatic aura, this is immediately followed by the agony of the seizure and post-ictal phase.

However, even though Myshkin recognises that such spiritual ecstasy is borne of his illness, and may indeed be simply a manifestation of his illness (which medicine now knows to be the case), he still unswervingly believes the intensity of the sensation makes it a real experience independent of his malaise. Such unswerving faith recalls Dostoevskii's personal thoughts written in his letter to Nataliia Dmitrievna Fonvizina upon his release from the Omsk prison camp in 1854: 'если б кто мне доказал, что Христос вне истины, и *действительно* было бы, что истина вне Христа, то мне

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[346] Kent, p. 122
[347] Dalton, p. 182
[348] Ibid., p. 139
[349] Rice, p. 289
[350] Slattery, p. 104

лучше хотелось бы оставаться со Христом, нежели с истиной.' (28/1:176) Dostoevskii's faith shows, like Myshkin's, an intense experience of life that borders on death, and belief in a life beyond death. There is a distinct transference of faith in an ideal from author to character here.

It is this faith in his vision of eternity that forms the basis of Myshkin's 'idiotic' behaviour in the novel. The threatened annihilation of character inherent in the aura's visions is made partially manifest here: Myshkin is isolated from contemporary society because he feels he has had access to the great mysteries of life, therefore money, social standing and etiquette have little real meaning for him. He is consequently treated with disdain as a simpleton, a nobody.

Yet his meekness rubs off on others, allowing characters to take a more objective view of their behaviour and realise the irrationality of their socially informed actions. In this manner, Myshkin transfers a little of his harmonious vision to those with whom he comes into contact. He therefore can be seen as some sort of saint, who attempts to preach his divine visions to others and influence them accordingly.

At the same time, however, Myshkin finds he is drawn in to society and begins to participate in its functions. This is most aptly displayed in the Prince's relationships with the two women he becomes torn between, Aglaia Epanchina and Nastas'ia Filippovna Barashkova. His 'saintliness' reveals that he cannot love in an earthly fashion; for the harmony and inter-connectedness he has gleaned from the aura has rendered a simple coupling with another human being irrelevant. His 'love' for Aglaia is foisted upon him by society – he is 'expected' to marry; and that for Nastas'ia is purely a saintly effort to save her from her self-destructive impulses. His undeniable attachment to both also has a basis in the aura's sensation of 'гармония, красота', which leads to the prince's belief that 'красота спасет мир'. It ought, then, to be protected.

In Myshkin's failure to fulfil either of these relationships, Dostoevskii shows the prince's folly in basing his entire world outlook on his experiences of the epileptic aura. In the novel's final scene, by Nastas'ia's death bed, upon realising he has been unable to save Nastas'ia from herself and from Rogozhin's knife, Myshkin sees this too. As he realises his failure, and the failure of his ideal subconscious vision, he

reverts to the 'idiotic' state of his time in Switzerland. It follows, then, that Myshkin, too, is related to the *мечтатель*, who founded his or her existence on subconscious fantasy. He too has been stung by reality, and crawls back into his 'shell'.

Myshkin's experiences of the ecstatic aura can be said to be a microcosm of the novel's events, for each glimpse of the aura's paradise must end in the unbearable pain of seizure and the 'idiocy' of the post-ictal phase: they are inseparable. Dennis Slattery affirms that 'the prince cannot simply enjoy the flood of light without the wake that it brings – total darkness, chaos and unconsciousness. Both the brilliant light and the onrushing darkness comprise the complete experience. His vision contains its own opposition – disease.'[351]

Polar opposites of many kinds can be found in *Идиот*, and they always appear in tandem: for the ecstasy of aura, there is the agony of seizure; for the radiant beauty of Nastas'ia, the beauty that can save the world, there is the dark threat of Rogozhin, which will destroy it. Such opposites are a fact of nature and life, and it is the prince's tragedy that he cannot, or refuses to, recognise this. He tries to see good in Rogozhin, for example, and believes he can be saved. More importantly, he cannot, or refuses to, recognise that his visions of beauty and harmony are but symptoms of disease, and fleeting ones at that. Myshkin, in trying to preach these visions to humanity through his actions, is but one man facing the impossible task of trying to 'convert' the multitude to his way of thinking. In these actions, he is Christ-like – but he is not Christ. Joseph Frank confirms that he can only fail, that Myshkin is 'inevitably doomed to catastrophe because the unearthly light of love and universal reconciliation cannot illuminate the fallen world of man for more than a dazzling and self-destructive instant.'[352]

The only other character in Dostoevskii's canon through which it is possible to gain a deeper understanding of the subconscious effects of the epileptic aura is Kirillov in *Бесы*, who provides an account of his experiences that is just as eloquent as that given in *Идиот*:

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[351] Slattery, p. 159
[352] Frank, *The Miraculous Years*, p. 327

> Есть секунды, их всего зараз приходит пять или шесть, и вы вдруг чувствуете присутствие вечной гармонии, совершенно достигнутой. Это не земное; я не про то, что оно небесное, а про то, что человек в земном виде не может перенести. Надо перемениться физически или умереть. «Это чувство ясное и неоспоримое. Как будто вдруг ощущаете всю природу и вдруг говорите: да, это правда. […] это не умиление, а только так, радость. Вы не прощаете ничего, потому что прощать уже нечего. […] Всего страшнее, что так ужасно ясно и такая радость. Если более пяти секунд – то душа не выдержит и должна исчезнуть. В эти пять секунд и проживаю жизнь и за них отдам всю мою жизнь, потому что стоит. Чтобы выдержать десять секунд, надо перемениться физически. (10:450)

Such a feeling of almost divine harmony is problematic in discussing the character of Kirillov, a supposed rational materialist who, like most other members of the novel's insurrectionary cell, has been almost bullied into his extreme convictions by their leader, Petr Verkhovenskii.

Kirillov presents the experience as more ambiguous. By Myshkin's account, the ecstatic aura is an undiluted, perfect few seconds of humanity, imbuing the epileptic with a keener appreciation of life. Kirillov's account is slightly more threatening: 'Надо перемениться физически или умереть,' he says; the aura's sudden absolute lucidity is 'страшно'. Although he describes joy and harmony as Myshkin does, it is clear he is also scared by such extremes of feeling. His experience of the aura has made it difficult for him to uphold his denial of spirituality – and it is almost certainly due to these intense, harmonious moments that he has chosen to become the cell's scapegoat suicide. For Kirillov seems unimpressed by everyday life, as if his fits, these peaks of experience, have rendered everything else so mundane as to become meaningless – the same reason that Myshkin cannot fall in love. He says he would gladly give his whole life for such moments and, in committing suicide, 'changing physically', he may perhaps gain constant access to them – his own perception of heaven which would tie in with his atheism.

The reader later finds that Kirillov is not as coldly rational as he would like to be. During the harrowing scene of his suicide, his fear of death, channelled through his fear of the aura – his fear of intense feeling and the annihilation of his self – resurfaces, and he finds himself desperately clinging to life. He procrastinates over the deed by continually rationalising his plan with Petr Verkhovenskii and arguing

with him over the wording of his suicide note. There is then an agonising wait after Kirillov shuts himself in his room to finally pull the trigger; when Verkhovenskii checks on him, Kirillov attacks him, biting his finger, as if in a primal means of self-defence. While these actions are perhaps understandable for a man on the brink of suicide, many of these symptoms can also be construed as prodromal or even related to partial seizures: Kirillov's pacing, paleness, delirium bordering on hysteria and his primitive attack on Verkhovenskii all indicate this. The epileptic condition and suicide converge to powerful, macabre, effect; it may even be conjectured that, when Kirillov does finally pull the trigger, killing himself, he does so at the onset of the aura, as if to finally 'перемениться физически'. For Kirillov, the intense aura may have been a 'portal' to that most intense experience, death.

The aura, then, is the most intense subconscious experience encountered by any of Dostoevskii's characters, so powerful that it seems to give access to mankind's well of experience, its 'collective unconscious' – portraying the hopes, fears and desires of the character and humanity as a whole, and offering a glimpse of eternity when 'время больше не будет' (8:189)[353]. Yet, the imaginative potential for this extraordinary subconscious imagery seems to be only fulfilled in two characters, and in one, Kirillov, only fleetingly. It follows that Prince Myshkin stands as Dostoevskii's greatest literary embodiment of his debilitating condition.

Furthermore, Dostoevskii's portrayal of Myshkin displays many other, lesser, but by no means ineffective modes of imagery of the subconscious. In examining these episodes of imagery of the subconscious, we should be able to gain a clearer view of the epileptic condition in general and its effect on character; and also glean further understanding into how this imagery is expressed and develops during the course of the entire text. These different aspects of imagery of the subconscious born of epilepsy will be discussed in the same order as the first five chapters of this thesis.

Daydreams

For the harmonious insights afforded by the ecstatic aura, Myshkin, like any epileptic, pays heavily with a post-ictal phase that can be physically and mentally

[353] The line is taken from Revelation 10:6.

debilitating, evident in his period of 'idiocy' in Switzerland when he was treated for his condition before the events of *Идиот*. But the after-effects of each fit Myshkin experiences still take him back to this time: 'отупение, душевный мрак, идиотизм стояли пред ним ярким последствием этих «высочайших минут».' (8:188) As Myshkin recalls his recovery in Switzerland:

> я только молча смотрел и, помню, даже ни о чем не расспрашивал. Это было после ряда сильных и мучительных припадков моей болезни, а я всегда, если болезнь усиливалась и припадки повторялись несколько раз сряду, впадал в полное отупение, терял совершенно память, а ум хотя и работал, но логически течение мысли как бы обрывалось. (8:48)

While these temporary traits mirror the confusion and dreamlike automatism prevalent in the prodrome, the passivity of the post-ictal condition is a marked contrast from the prodrome's activity, which builds in intensity until the explosion of the fit, the rising curve of the 'wave'. The post-ictal symptoms nevertheless impress a dreamlike quality on the epileptic's reality: the victim becomes an observer, incapable of extensive thought and reacting only to the most immediate thoughts and actions. Thought processes revert to that of daydreaming, where fractured images bleed into each other, augment each other. No 'logical flow' of reality is apparent to the observer, much like a dream. Occasionally, such post-fit symptoms can adopt, and even surpass, the intensity of the prodrome in moments of inspirational illumination. The prominent example in *Идиот* is Myshkin's vision in the Alps, which he experiences upon gazing out over a view to a high waterfall:

> Солнце яркое, небо голубое, тишина страшная. Вот тут-то, бывало, и зовет всё куда-то, и мне всё казалось, что если пойти всё прямо, идти долго-долго и зайти вот за эту линию, за ту самую, где небо с землей встречается, то там вся и разгадка, и тотчас же новую жизнь увидишь, в тысячу раз сильней и шумней, чем у нас; такой большой город мне всё мечтался, как Неаполь, в нем всё дворцы, шум, гром, жизнь... Да мало ли что мечталось! (8:51)

The intensity of this experience even suggests the aura itself, with its connectivity to life and eternity being expressed by attaining the 'линия, где небо с землей встречается' and 'вся разгадка'. It is almost a vision of heaven or paradise, a promise of an answer to everything and, therefore, eternal peace. The line 'бывало зовет всё куда-то' suggests both an auditory hallucination and a perhaps even a

divine source for this experience: the ‘большой город’ may even refer to the New Jerusalem. Yet this may simply be a particularly vivid prodromal experience, or a recollection of the aura in the post-ictal state, or an example of an inter-ictal phenomenon – perhaps a sensory hallucination.

Myshkin fondly remembers this moment of inspirational illumination as a time when he was at peace, and he brings it to mind when he is among company in Pavlovsk:

> О как бы он хотел очутиться теперь там и думать об одном […] и на тысячу лет бы хватило! И пусть, пусть здесь совсем забудут его […] даже лучше, если б и совсем не знали его и всё это видение было бы в одном только сне. Да и не всё ли равно, что во сне, что наяву! (8:287)

Myshkin would evidently be happy in trying to ponder the answers to life’s great mysteries, ‘зайти вот за эту линию, где небо с землей встречается’. He realises at this moment of subconscious introspection that he is completely out of place in contemporary society, and would return to Switzerland immediately if he could. He temporarily forgets his quest to defend and save beauty – in which he feels he is failing, if we take into account his desire that those in his circle had never met him – and his true subconscious wish is revealed: ‘a desire to merge with eternity, to break from the normal limits of human temporality,’[354] according to Slattery. He wishes to be at peace again, to observe, think, daydream. To an extent, he succeeds here. Even the figure of Aglaia, sitting beside him, becomes a muted form of her true self: ‘he sees her rather as an object, as if he were gazing at a portrait of her from a far distance … She has become part of his Swiss landscape.’[355]

The passage, in fact, contains many similarities to Raskol’nikov’s vision across the Siberian steppe at the end of *Преступление и наказание*, which precedes his ultimate repentance for his crime before Sonia. The vast expanse and distant horizon looks ahead to Myshkin’s desire to reach that point. This ‘dream of infinite space’[356] speaks of a desire for freedom: for Raskol’nikov, literal freedom from prison, but more significantly freedom from his obsessive ‘идея’; for Myshkin, the freedom of eternity that is also conveyed in his moments of ecstatic aura, freedom from earthly

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[354] Slattery, p. 44
[355] Ibid., p. 135
[356] Catteau, p. 382

chains that only eternal peace can bring. In both cases, time is negated: in Raskol'nikov's vision, 'самое время остановилось, точно не прошли еще века Авраама и стад его' (6:421), his sentence of time in prison has become less meaningful now a greater mental freedom has been achieved; Myshkin simply, but more expansively, longs for eternity. 'At these moments space opens out like a soothing infinity in which mutilating time, experienced as intolerable stress and agony, fades out of sight.'[357]

The passage in which Myshkin desires to return to the Alpine vision also raises a peculiar point about his mode of consciousness: 'Да и не всё ли равно, что во сне, что наяву!' he wonders. If we consider the three main stages of the epileptic rhythm – prodrome, fit and post-fit – the question must be raised: does Myshkin constantly exist in a state of subconscious experience, at the very least the dreamlike reality of the prodrome or post-ictal 'idiocy'? Do these merge somehow to form a seamless, dreamlike whole, an epileptic form of the continuity hypothesis? Clinical sources indicate that this is possible,[358] and in *Идиот* this would certainly seem to be the case during Myshkin's period of recuperation in Switzerland – even his tale of how he wins acceptance for the ostracised village girl Marie has an element of myth or fairy tale about it. But even in St Petersburg and Pavlovsk, Myshkin's aloof character, so detached from the norms of the society he moves in, would also suggest he lives in a dreamlike world, as would other symptoms: his periods of confusion, his dreams and their mixing with reality in the Pavlovsk park, and his *déjà vu* experiences, such as his feeling, on their first meeting, that he has met Nastas'ia previously – although he has previously seen her portrait in a photograph, his sensations are evidently much stronger than mere recollection.

Dreamlike reality – confusion

The most notable manifestation of epileptic subconscious activity in *Идиот*, after the aura, is Myshkin's prodrome, the increasingly confused state that occurs in the epilepsy sufferer in the minutes, hours, or perhaps even days leading up to the

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[357] Ibid.
[358] See Harrington, p. 233

seizure. Its confused, dreamlike nature is similar to the post-ictal phase of epilepsy, but whereas the latter features more in flashbacks of Myshkin's time in Switzerland, the prodrome is featured in the present reality of the text.

The prelude to Myshkin's first fit in *Идиот* is, certainly, the most detailed account of the prodrome that we have from Dostoevskii's pen, and – while no direct correlations with the author exist – is so rich in detail that it must feature episodes or at least sensations taken directly from personal experience. In any case, it affords piercing insights into Myshkin's subconscious motivations.

Myshkin's prodrome seems to commence the moment he arrives in St Petersburg, another example of the city acting as the perfect setting – or even the catalyst – to subconscious imagery of a dreamlike nature:

> При выходе из вагона князю вдруг померещился странный, горячий взгляд чьих-то двух глаз, в толпе, осадившей прибывших с поездом. Поглядев внимательнее, он уже ничего более не различил. Конечно, только померещилось; но впечатление осталось неприятное. (8:158)

As Robin Miller has pointed out, the narrative at this point moves into a more fantastic, Gothic mode.[359] In an unusual display of synecdoche, Dostoevskii uses the recurrent appearance – or at least Myshkin's seeming awareness ('померещился') – of these eyes to symbolise Rogozhin. From the outset they amount to a persistent presence near Myshkin during his wanderings around St Petersburg, leaving the prince with a 'неприятное впечатление' from his first moments in the city until his fit. It could actually be a startling example of a prodromal hallucination, appearing as it does at the beginning of Myshkin's inexorable progression towards a seizure. In fact, it seems to initiate it: for it is the near-constant presence of these eyes that adds to the psychological and subconscious pressure on the prince. Rogozhin's eyes seem to embody a sense of unworthy guilt Myshkin feels towards him, for becoming involved in Nastas'ia's life. Myshkin persists in trying to save this woman, this ideal of beauty, from herself, but in doing so is leading her away from Rogozhin, who seems to be more attuned to her wild nature. His jealous eyes now appear to watch Myshkin's every step as he wanders through St Petersburg.

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[359] Miller, *Dostoevsky and* The Idiot, p. 115

More symptoms of the prodrome soon become evident:

> Князь вышел и направился машинально куда глаза глядят. […] Несколько времени князь бродил без цели. […] Он был в мучительном напряжении и беспокойстве и в то же самое время чувствовал необыкновенную потребность уединения. Ему хотелось быть одному и отдаться всему этому страдательному напряжению совершенно пассивно, не ища ни малейшего выхода. […] «Что же, разве я виноват во всем этом?» – бормотал он про себя, почти не сознавая своих слов. (8:186)

This aimless, mechanical wandering, the muttering and desire for solitude all recall the confused, dreamlike states of Raskol'nikov and Ordynov. The humidity of the city also recalls the stifling summer during which the events of *Преступление и наказание* take place, and is heightened by a gathering thunderstorm. Yet, whereas the state of oblivion shared by Raskol'nikov and Ordynov is generally broken by external events, Myshkin's introversion is punctuated by sudden, internal, almost instinctual, intense urges. For example: 'Уединение скоро стало ему невыносимо; новый порыв горячо охватил его сердце, и на мгновение ярким светом озарился мрак, в котором тосковала душа его.' (8:186) Again, soon after, 'чрезвычайное, неотразимое желание, почти соблазн, вдруг оцепенил всю его волю.' (8:189)

It seems his desire is to visit Nastas'ia, although his 'новый порыв' and 'чрезвычайное, неотразимое желание' – which later becomes an 'особенная, внезапная идея' – are not disclosed. It is entirely possible that, as Myshkin's mind grows ever dimmer as his fit approaches, he himself has no idea what his intentions are. His imagination, memory and perception begin to blur. In puzzlement, he returns to a shop window he thinks he may have passed before, and wonders: 'Существует ли в самом деле эта лавка и этот товар? […] Он знал, что в такое предприпадочное время он бывает необыкновенно рассеян и часто даже смешивает предметы и лица' (8:187). The prince has come to almost question reality; yet he simultaneously knows this feeling is just part of his impending fit. But despite this lucidity – which has been medically attested[360] and is similar, perhaps, to the way that dreamers are sometimes aware they are dreaming – he barely considers any practical measures that may aid him when the attack inevitably occurs; for

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[360] See Harrington, p. 233

example, returning to his hotel and informing a doctor. In his confusion, Myshkin instead tries to fight the effects of the prodrome, to deny the fit, by making a mental effort to hold on to immediate reality: 'Он прилеплялся воспоминаниями и умом к каждому внешнему предмету, и ему это нравилось: ему всё хотелось что-то забыть, настоящее, насущное' (8:189).

But it is futile – his confused state grows increasingly worse. Any inner voice prompting sensible action is soon disregarded: 'Князь немедленно хотел поворотить назад к себе, в гостиницу; даже повернулся и пошел; но чрез минуту остановился, обдумал и воротился опять по прежней дороге.' (8:191)

This state of mind allows the reader access to some of Myshkin's most personal thoughts of the whole novel, as he examines his role in his love triangle with Rogozhin and Nastas'ia. Rice states that 'the whole mood is infused with psychological motivation logically linked with the novel's plot, or at least left in suspension as something rooted in psychological reality, and not imposed as a purely hallucinatory unreality'[361]. We see more of Myshkin's desires – normally hidden under his meek exterior – when this preoccupation suddenly takes form upon once again seeing Rogozhin's eyes. Unknowingly to himself, he purposefully wants to confront Rogozhin over the whole affair – this, we discover, is his 'внезапная идея':

> Почему с ним опять эта дрожь, этот пот холодный, этот мрак и холод душевный? Потому ли, что опять он увидел сейчас эти *глаза*? Но ведь он и пошел же из Летнего сада единственно с тем, чтоб их увидать! В этом ведь и состояла его «внезапная идея». Он настойчиво захотел увидать эти «давешние глаза», чтоб окончательно убедиться, что он непременно встретит их *там*, у этого дома. Это было судорожное желание его, и отчего же он так раздавлен и поражен теперь тем, что их в самом деле сейчас увидел? Точно не ожидал! Да, это были *те самые* глаза […] которые сверкнули на него утром, в толпе […] те самые […] взгляд которых он поймал потом давеча, у себя за плечами […] И князю ужасно захотелось, еще давно, в воксале […] вдруг опять увидел эти глаза, уже в третий раз в этот день, – подойти к Рогожину и сказать *ему*, «чьи это были глаза»! (8:192-93)

Here imagination and perception blur again: Myshkin does not see Rogozhin at all, then remembers that he did. Consciously, he prefers to shy away from all

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[361] Rice, p. 289

confrontation; but as his impending fit strips away his inhibitions, he seems to become bolder and actively tries to seek out Rogozhin. Outside Nastas'ia's Petersburg lodgings, he adopts a defensive yet confrontational stance:

> А теперь, у дома, он стоял по другой стороне улицы, шагах в пятидесяти наискось, на противоположном тротуаре, скрестив руки, и ждал. Тут же он был совсем на виду и, кажется, нарочно хотел быть на виду. Он стоял как обличитель и как судья, а не как... А не как кто? (8:193)

Again, confusion over his current situation returns, and this question is not answered; although 'competitor' is implied. But consciously, Myshkin cannot bring himself to describe himself as a rival for Nastas'ia – it seems too antagonistic and maybe even too absurd for him to admit. Perhaps he even realises himself that he is incapable of love in the earthly sense, the feelings of which the intense aura has far surpassed. Subconsciously, he seeks out Rogozhin to challenge him, but he shies away when he fast approaches the reality of the situation. When their eyes meet again in the crowd, Myshkin meekly turns away from Rogozhin, fearing his threatening presence: 'А почему же он, князь, не подошел теперь к нему сам и повернул от него, как бы ничего не заметив, хотя глаза их и встретились. […] было что-то такое в Рогожине […] что могло оправдывать ужасные предчувствия князя и возмущающие нашептывания его демона?' (8:193)

An uncanny presentiment of Rogozhin's attempted assault is then implied as Myshkin remembers both the knife on a table in Rogozhin's house, and how he had stopped in front of the cutler's shop. We recall that vivid *déjà-vu* is prevalent among epileptics and is a recognised symptom of the prodrome – although this subconscious episode could perhaps more accurately describe the unconscious threat that Myshkin fears from Rogozhin. They are, after all, competitors for the same woman, and, although Myshkin might consciously deny it, his subconscious makes it plain that he realises Rogozhin could kill to win Nastas'ia's hand. Jacques Catteau confirms these various implications of Myshkin's confused, clouded wanderings:

> Myshkin's walking is not as disordered as it seems; it is because he is unconsciously drawn between two impulses that he seems to wander, hesitate, return and set out again, first, to go to see Nastasya Fillipovna … and second to escape the immediate danger, whose obscure face is symbolised by the two eyes spying on him … The morbid anguish is

> experienced as the premonition of a crime – Rogozhin is there, lurking in the shadows, with his knife.[362]

Intense preoccupation, aimless wandering, great confusion and presentiment all contribute to the dreamlike quality of the prodrome. These are all heightened as the phase accelerates towards the aura and seizure.

Myshkin's fit occurs as his preoccupations and forebodings over Rogozhin are finally confirmed. As Rogozhin tries to attack the Prince with the knife on the hotel staircase, 'Два давешние глаза, *те же самые*, вдруг встретились с его взглядом.' (8:195) Then the fit strikes: 'вдруг как бы что-то разверзлось пред ним: необычайный *внутренный* свет озарил его душу.' (8:195)

This episode underlines the importance of the motif of Rogozhin's eyes. They seem to be the very cause of Myshkin's entire epileptic experience. They apparently initiate prodromal sensations in Myshkin as he arrives in St Petersburg, and also trigger the culmination, or indeed termination, of these sensations, the epileptic fit. Myshkin has finally confronted his subconscious wish by meeting these eyes directly: previously they had appeared in a crowd or established an uneasy sense of watchful presence. This disregards the earlier meeting between Myshkin and Rogozhin in the latter's house – an episode of relative clarity in the former's prodrome – in which it is almost entirely Rogozhin who speaks of Nastas'ia, and only their relationship is discussed. But here, returning to a more subconscious plane, the prince desires confrontation with the guilt-inducing eyes once more. However, he finds that he cannot cope with such direct confrontation after all. On the subconscious plane of the prodrome, Myshkin may find himself to be more assertive, but simultaneously, and perhaps as a result, the threat to his life is greater. The fit, then, acts as a kind of subconscious safety mechanism that spares him from harm, removing him from the prodromal state of mind to an even greater distance from threatening reality, saving him from Rogozhin's threatening eyes, and ultimately his lethal attack. The price is the 'idiocy' of the post-ictal phase.

Besides this extended episode, Myshkin also frequently experiences dislocated, confused, dreamlike situations in the park in Pavlovsk, where the Epanchins,

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[362] Catteau, p. 123

Ivolgins and their circle move to in the summer months. Here, however, it is not clear whether Myshkin is under the influence of the prodrome, for no fit is imminent. But we must raise again the point that the prince may experience a constant subconsciously heightened form of consciousness as part of his epileptic condition, and this may have swelled or subsided depending on various factors including his general health, climate etc. Much is made, however, of dreamlike 'enhancers' such as the 'carnivalesque' atmosphere of the holiday town of Pavlovsk, the sudden concentration of salubrious people in which puts a different spin on Bakhtin's idea of Dostoevskii's public 'площадь'. Slattery writes: 'Pavlovsk space is expansive, idyllic, green, summery, and unfettered with cares. It is the space of carnival-like behaviour, of holiday … People throw off the work of the city and begin to dream. Other worlds become possible at Pavlovsk.'[363] Dostoevskii also heavily uses the device of the twilit, slightly unreal summer 'white nights', amid which days seem to pass unnoticed.

In fact, at some points in the Pavlovsk narrative, dream and reality seem entwined and difficult to separate. Perhaps the most dreamlike occurrence of all is the 'apparition' of Nastas'ia that appears before Myshkin shortly after he had dreamed of her: 'всё кругом него как бы походило на сон. И вдруг, так же как и давеча, когда он оба раза проснулся на одном и том же видении, то же видение опять предстало ему.' (8:381) Furthermore, towards the end of their subsequent conversation, 'подле нее вдруг очутился Рогожин' (8:382), as if in the sudden jump cut of a dream. Both Nastas'ia and Rogozhin seem to be either projections of Myshkin's psyche into reality, or the continuation of his dream; yet this episode is woven seamlessly into the narrative and flows into and out of the certain, objective textual reality.

> The dreamlike nature of this episode is strengthened by the fact that it is just the sort of dream Myshkin might be expected to have, containing echoes of 'real events' from the preceding narrative and structures by the relationships with Nastasya and Rogozhin which he has tried to suppress from his waking life. Had the narrator presented it as a dream the reader would not have found it all implausible.[364]

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[363] Slattery, pp. 108-09
[364] Jones, *Dostoyevsky after Bakhtin*, pp. 133-34

The reader begins to lose trust in the narrator's ability to relate what is real and what is not, and this heightens the dreamlike atmosphere even further. In fact, it may also be another expression of the confused prodrome of the epileptic condition.

In a previous episode in the park, in which Myshkin reflects on his vision in the Alps, reality becomes warped again, as if experienced through semi-consciousness. The narrative tone, as in the previous example, turns slightly fantastical and sinister and, fittingly, Rogozhin makes appearances in the shadows.

> There is laughter all around … The prince hears Aglaya mutter to herself, 'Idiot'. The scene reads like a bad dream in which a normal situation has imperceptibly grown grotesque and unreal. Into the mood of mounting tension the narrator abruptly introduces the Gothic mode of heightened terror that heralds and reflects Rogozhin. The pale, dark stranger appears and disappears like a hallucination…

Miller even accepts that Rogozhin may be a hallucination: 'It is almost as if Myshkin's thoughts or moods could conjure up Rogozhin.'[365]

Other events at Pavlovsk, too, have a bizarre edge to them that add to the dreamlike nuance of the novel. When Nastas'ia strikes an officer with a riding crop after he has insulted her, the prince steps in to protect her from his reaction. Afterwards, he proposes, quite out of character, that they all get drunk. At another point, the prince arrives back at his home to find a busy party underway: 'про день своего рождения он и сам только что вспомнил нечаянно.' (8:305)

While the clouded, dreamlike world of Pavlovsk may not provide us with insight into character as piercing as Myshkin's earlier prodrome, its entire dreamlike mode is redolent of epileptic confusion. And, to a degree, it does strengthen further drives of Myshkin's character. His desire to see Nastas'ia is made manifest with her appearance; yet the danger she is in also becomes apparent with the sudden appearance of Rogozhin. (Their seeming inseparability also presages the prince's failure to save her from him.) Furthermore, Myshkin's very idea of protecting beauty is played out in his defending of Nastas'ia from the enraged officer.

Mention must also be made of the narrative technique of the novel, which at times adds to the confusion of its events. The narrator occupies varying positions with

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[365] Miller, *Dostoevsky and* The Idiot, p. 135

respect to his characters, particularly Myshkin. He weaves in and out of Myshkin's consciousness in the same manner as the dreamlike scenarios presented above: at times, omnipresent and objective, at others as if he is directly presenting Myshkin's thoughts. At these moments, as we have seen, we are best able to determine the prince's subconscious motivations. But this narrative instability makes it difficult for the reader to fully trust the narrator, and as a result the reality of the text seems to disintegrate at the moments when it is least objective.

There is also the extended scene of the prince's birthday party in which the characters seem to take over the narrative – it is almost entirely dialogue-based – and, according to Malcolm Jones, 'speak whatever rubbish comes into their heads'. The result is 'not unlike a dream'[366], in which even social structures and relationships become confused and 'even the narrator seems at sea and unable to distinguish the significant from the insignificant.'[367] Jones adds:

> we do not even know what sort of conduct is appropriate in the context, because the context conforms to no recognizable social situation; we are no longer sure what the different characters feel about each other at any particular moment or what conduct to expect from them… The techniques of effective story-telling themselves are being undermined.[368]

Whether Dostoevskii crafted this on purpose is difficult to discern, but there is no doubt that the narrator's confused stance equates to Myshkin's common confusion.

The moment of greatest penetration into Myshkin's mind by the narrator is the commentary on dreams, when Myshkin reads Nastas'ia's letters to Aglaia. At this point, says Miller,

> the borders between dreaming and waking, between fantasy and reality break down and the narrator is closer to being one with Myshkin than he has been at any point in the novel. The way he talks about dreams is different from the other digressive paragraphs that have appeared so far: this digression does not distance the narrator and his reader from the action but rather draws them both closer to it. …[The narrator's] thoughts are in fact indistinguishable from Myshkin's and could read as Myshkin's own interior monologue…[369]

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[366] Jones, *Dostoyevsky after Bakhtin*, p. 135
[367] Ibid., p. 119
[368] Ibid., p. 135
[369] Miller, *Dostoevsky and* The Idiot, p. 138

Furthermore, the distance between Dostoevskii and the narrator breaks down. There appears to be no narrative authority in this passage; it could just as well be extracted from one of Dostoevskii's letters. It follows that, at this point, author, narrator and character become one. It may offer the reader little new information about Myshkin, but it wholly confirms the author's views on dreams and the power of subconscious phenomena as a link to some great mystery.

Dreamlike reality – intensity

The dreamlike mode of consciousness that Myshkin occupies also arises as a result of the unusually intense episodes of the novel, the most intense, obviously, being the aura itself. Furthermore, the different phases of the epileptic condition – prodrome, aura/seizure, and post-ictal 'idiocy' – help to structure the novel with its own epileptic 'rhythm'. Dalton writes that 'the action seems to progress unevenly, in waves of tension that gather and burst in climactic scenes of spectacular emotional violence, leaving the narrative energy of the novel depleted and for a time directionless, until a new wave of tension begins to accumulate.'[370] These extended moments of rising intensity echo the prodrome, which then climax in powerful denouement, much like the aura. There then follows a more settled, 'recuperative' period in which either little happens, or the action is only fleetingly described. It can be argued that the whole novel follows subsequent waves of this pattern.

Part One as a whole is a fine example. The action starts off ordinarily enough with the conversation of strangers on a train: Myshkin, Rogozhin and, to a lesser degree, Lebedev. As Myshkin is subsequently introduced to the Epanchin household, patterns begin to emerge and a tension begins to rest on these increasingly interwoven threads. This tension lies greatly with Nastas'ia, at this stage only a name and a photograph, but a figure who seems to cause controversy, devotion and aversion in equal measure among the growing cast of characters. Part One reaches its intense climax in the party at the Ivolgins, in which Nastas'ia finally appears, later followed by Rogozhin and a rowdy band of his followers. The novel, up to this point largely comprised of dialogue, moves more towards physical action. There are a

[370] Dalton, p. 124

number of set-pieces: Gania slapping Myshkin, Nastas'ia throwing Rogozhin's 100,000 roubles into the fireplace, and Rogozhin's very entrance and whisking away of Nastas'ia at the section's close. The tightly packed events of Part One take place on one day, November 27. Catteau summarises:

> As the tension rises, the interventions of the author are less frequent, the moments of intensity rush on and are linked together more closely. The violent surge, as in epilepsy, ends with a descent into darkness. There is a magnificent crescendo where the increase in power is accompanied by mad acceleration and an incredible concentration of events…[371]

Part Two then opens after a six-month break in which a great deal happens, but of which little is detailed. For example, Myshkin realises his inheritance and becomes suddenly wealthy. Although Nastas'ia has eloped with Rogozhin, she has since met with the prince: but again, little is described. Such lack of detail of such important events echoes the 'idiocy' of the post-ictal phase, in which the epileptic is a simple observer of events, yet cannot process them as a whole. Certain details of this gap only resurface at later parts of the narrative, like lost fragments of a dream. Reality becomes fractured, and it is only when the narrative 'recovers' that it can resume.[372] Similarly, after Myshkin's first fit in St Petersburg, detail is sketchy. By the time the narrative resumes properly, the scene has moved to Pavlovsk.

This warping of time ties in deeper to the role of epilepsy in the novel. We have already seen how the aura is almost a kind of attempt to escape from time into eternity. This in turn is the great significance of Myshkin's story of the man condemned to death, who tries to draw the maximum experience out of each remaining minute to lengthen his life: 'he seeks the infinite by denying the temporal reality of those five minutes'[373]. It is also related to Myshkin's vision in Switzerland: as he wants to merge with the line where horizon and sky meet, so the condemned man wants to become part of the light glinting of the cupola of a nearby church. Along with the aura, these episodes detail a desire for freedom from earthly chains, to be removed from time. For Myshkin it is moments of aura and inspirational illumination that allow these insights; for the condemned man it is intensity of reality

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[371] Catteau, p. 338
[372] This narrative technique is also a method of concealment, which keeps the reader intrigued.
[373] Slattery, p. 44

in the face of imminent death. At these points existence seems to condense into what Gary Morson has dubbed 'vortex time', in which all events coalesce towards a definite, unavoidable conclusion: be it death or any of Dostoevskii's famous scandal scenes. 'And as the catastrophe or scandal approaches, time speeds up. Crises follow each other with increasing rapidity until a moment of apparently *infinite temporal density* is reached'[374]. Life does not seem so real and alive as in these last moments, a fact Dostoevskii knew too well. But at this moment of ultimate 'density', something must give. As Kirillov says, that moment of aura is pure joy, but unbearable: so the agony of seizure follows; for the condemned man, death. These moments can rightfully be called the height of Dostoevskii's technique of dreamlike intensity.

They are so inherently powerful because, as Dalton writes, 'the reader is made to share to an extraordinary degree in the subjective experience of extreme states'[375]. Just as we are allowed intense scrutiny of Myshkin's psyche through the various subconscious phenomena he experiences, so the reader recalls his or her own similar experiences. And to compensate for those experiences that may be beyond the reader's ken – the ecstatic aura, for example – Dostoevskii affords us a near-first-person perspective of imminent death via the condemned man, tapping into every person's ultimate fear.

> Dostoevsky is not content to describe the man on the scaffold as he appears from outside; he gives us the very particles of the condemned man's thought and feeling, his every fugitive impression and sensation as his time runs out, up to the moment when the blade descends on his neck – and even after. The language of the scene evokes a stream of preconscious imagery in the reader in which his own fears and fantasies of extinction are contained. Through the power of language to transfer and mediate such preconscious and unconscious [i.e. subconscious] thought and imagery, the prisoner's experience takes on the power of the reader's deepest emotions – the terror of the man on the scaffold is fused with the reader's own most primitive fears.[376]

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[374] Morson, 'Introductory Study,' in Dostoevsky, *A Writer's Diary, Volume One 1873-1876*, p. 95
[375] Dalton, p. 143
[376] Ibid.

The dreamlike intensity of *Идиот*, therefore, taps into the *мистический ужас* of existentialism. The fear and threat of death present in us all becomes the most intense reality of all.

There is also a strong sense of Bakhtinian 'карнавальное время' in *Идиот*, which particularly intensifies episodes – such as those in the holiday town of Pavlovsk. Bakhtin himself points to Part One, that crammed opening day of the narrative, 'как бы выключенного из исторического времени, протекающего по своим особым карнавальным законам и вмещающего в себя неограниченное количество радикальных смен и метаморфоз.'[377] He gives as an example the fact that the prince begins the day penniless with just a bundle of assets, but ends the day a potential millionaire upon news of his inheritance. The whirlwind of events gathers in force towards the end of this first day, in which the carnivalesque events of the public 'площадь', governed by 'карнавальное время', are brought inside to the Ivolgins' apartment, which becomes increasingly busy with onlookers and participants. This is also true of Myshkin's accommodation in Pavlovsk, which is host to his chaotic, dialogue-driven birthday party, and 'seems to be almost an extension of the street, both with respect to freedom of access and to behaviour'[378].

Ultimately, the raft of subconscious phenomena in the novel emanates from the character of Myshkin. It is he, then, who embodies the notion of fantastic realism in the text. He enters into St Petersburg's social set from abroad, from a state of dreamlike idiocy, and seems to commune with eternity at the peaks of his illness. On a day-to-day basis, his proclivity to dreams and transcendence is evident wherever he goes and affects the other characters. His meekness, naiveté and good, kind nature may affect others in different ways, but, in offering people a glimpse of a simpler world outlook, he prompts them all to dream that they too could live like him, Dostoevskii's intended 'вполне прекрасный человек'[379]. As Slattery writes, 'he serves as an inducement to fantasy'[380], adding: 'In the people who constellate around Myshkin there is an awakening to the truth of themselves by means of his tenacious

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[377] Бахтин, p. 303
[378] Jones, *Dostoyevsky after Bakhtin*, p. 118
[379] As stated in a letter to A. N. Maikov dated December 31, 1867 (28/2:241)
[380] Slattery, p. 164

dreams. All the other characters see themselves reflected through Myshkin even as they first define him through themselves.'[381]

It is Myshkin's very simplicity that makes them dare to dream: 'through the metaphor of fantasy embodied by Prince Myshkin, the community comes to realize that the extraordinary is hidden within the ordinary like an invisible presence. Fidelity to the ordinary will reveal the extraordinary virtues that serve as guides to wholeness and order.'[382] He gives significance to the mundane in his childlike view of the world, which awakens a realisation in those around him that life in all its forms is beautiful, even spiritual:

> В любой форме, пустой для другого, он ищет душу, смысл, жизнь и характер. Он не окружает себя людьми, как зеркалами, отражающими его собственные черты, но входит в душу каждого из них, как в иной мир, умея найти отзвук этого мира и в своей душе, раздвигая пространство своего мира беспредельно, а не сжимая весь мир до своего пространства, множимого в пустых повторениях.
>
> И поэтому именно в восприятии князем пейзажа и портрета наиболее очевидна указанная уже разница: глядя на пейзаж, князь уверенно называет место, *воспроизводимое* пейзажем. Глядя на портрет и затем на лик Настасьи Филлиповны, князь, утверждая, что где-то видел эти глаза, тут же одернет себя: «Быть не может. Да я и не был-то здесь никогда. Может быть, во сне.» Но и Настасья Филлиповна подтвердит: «Что это, я тоже его будто где-то видела». Их взаимное видение явно отнесено к другому миру, миру иных «реальностей» – тех, что можно провидеть, но нельзя скопировать. Это мир, близкий миру иконы.[383]

However, in Dostoevskii's world a complete portrayal of fantastic realism required the polar opposite of goodness and beauty: so it is fitting, then, that Rogozhin enters Russia, and indeed the narrative as a whole, on the same train as Myshkin. In addition, Myshkin's own vision of beauty, in the epileptic aura, is tainted by its very nature as a symptom of disease, and is swiftly followed by debilitating seizure. It was no less than the master realist Dostoevskii demanded of his fantastic realism for it to be completely real.

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[381] Ibid., pp. 166-67
[382] Ibid., p. 208
[383] Касаткина, p. 258

Hallucinations

The principle hallucination in *Идиот* has already been discussed: that of Rogozhin's synecdochal eyes at the beginning of Myshkin's prodrome in St Petersburg. Their subconscious power is so great that there is a chance they even initiate the prodromal phase – and end it too, when Myshkin is seized by a fit upon coming face to face with the same eyes during Rogozhin's murder attempt. The eyes are therefore a hallucinatory representation of Rogozhin the character, a subconscious self-defence to prevent Myshkin being confronted fully by the man he feels guilty before, for his involvement with Nastas'ia; yet they also represent Rogozhin the hallucination or dream, who will be later seen in such a dreamlike fashion in the Pavlovsk park. It is a stark example of how detached from reality Rogozhin seems, as if he is indeed the psychic projection of primal evil that the delirious Ippolit saw in his room.

Later, Rogozhin's eyes return to haunt Myshkin shortly before his wedding to Nastas'ia, at the funeral of General Ivolgin. 'мне как будто его глаза показались,' he says, looking round the church. Unable, or unwilling through fear, to read this sign, Myshkin cannot stop Nastas'ia from eloping with Rogozhin once more. In echoing his first fit, the eyes are also a premonition of Myshkin's relapse into the post-ictal 'idiocy' of his time in Switzerland, at the novel's dramatic end. Nastas'ia too sees and fears Rogozhin's eyes and senses in them a sinister foreboding, as she mentions in one of her letters to Aglaia: 'Эти глаза теперь *молчат*, (они всё молчат), но я знаю их тайну. У него дом мрачный, скучный, и в нем тайна. Я уверена, что у него в ящике спрятана бритва, обмотанная шелком, как и у того московского убийцы.' (8:380)

Miller identifies a significant forebear for Rogozhin in the eponymous character of Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820), a favourite Gothic novel of Dostoevskii's:

> interrupting a wedding feast, the terrible effect of his stare ultimately causes the death of the bride and the insanity of the groom. This complex of ideas reverberates through *The Idiot*: Rogozhin's stare persistently haunts Myshkin and his presence on the wedding day of Myshkin and

> Nastasia Filippovna results in the 'bride's' death and the 'groom's' madness.[384]

Using such a comparison we can again gauge the power of this epileptic hallucination in determining Myshkin's actions, and also in reinforcing Rogozhin's position in this novel as a symbol, or perhaps even psychic projection, of destructive passion.

At another point in the novel, shortly before the meeting between Aglaia and Nastas'ia, it is in fact the latter's eyes that appear before Myshkin in a *греза*: 'в эти лихорадочные часы почти всё время представлялись ему ее глаза, ее взгляд, слышались ее слова' (8:467). This ties Nastas'ia to both Rogozhin the character and Rogozhin the embodiment of evil: for she herself can be viewed as the archetype of the fallen woman who flirts with evil. The subconscious appearance of her eyes suggests she may be as much a 'projection', or at least have as many negative values projected on her, as Rogozhin.

Split personality

While there is no direct indication of any split personality (in the clinical sense) in *Идиот*, Myshkin exudes some symptoms of this condition. So while there is no direct 'double' of Myshkin, the nature of the epileptic prodrome and inter-ictal phase means that changes in character are quite common for him. At certain moments in the narrative he behaves distinctly out of character.

Prominent examples would be the voicing of his desire to get drunk after defending Nastas'ia Filippovna from the enraged cavalry officer whom she struck with a riding crop; his desire to stand up to the threat of Rogozhin during his prodromal confusion in St Petersburg; and, perhaps most notably, Myshkin's peculiarly hostile anti-Catholic rant at the Epanchins' party in the minutes leading up to his second fit. These moments augment the influence of the epileptic condition on the text by boosting its dreamlike nature.

On a more figurative level, there are pairings of characters that follow the line of previous 'doubles' such as Raskol'nikov and Svidrigailov, but in *Идиот* they appear

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[384] Miller, *Dostoevsky and* The Idiot, p. 114

as stricter opposites. So while Raskol'nikov and Svidrigailov may be 'ягоды одного поля' in their pursuit of the will to power and self-determination, the pairing of Myshkin and Rogozhin exists on a more Manichaean opposition of angelic and diabolic natures. In fact, while they do have similar traits in the text – for example, their alienation from society because they do not seem to fit in with their contemporaries – it is perhaps a bit of a stretch to call them doubles at all. This is exemplified in Nastas'ia's torn attraction between both men in terms of what they offer her: in Myshkin, redemption; in Rogozhin, the opportunity to wallow in vice. Their most obvious common ground seems to be their love for the same woman, but even this is for different facets of the same woman.

This means that if there is one truly split personality in the novel, it is Nastas'ia. Throughout the text she is torn between two men and the different fate that they offer her. Yet there is a sad understanding all the while that she could never find happiness with the prince, and that it is in her nature to pursue vice and live the life of a fallen woman. While she sees, and indeed craves redemption in Myshkin, she knows it is a futile goal, and that she is destined to die at Rogozhin's hand.

Nastas'ia herself forms a pairing with Aglaia, and again it is one of opposites: the fallen woman and the chaste young girl. Both in a sense strive towards the opposite – in Nastas'ia's search for redemption and Aglaia's very contact with the other that could be seen to tarnish her reputation – but, despite both harbouring a self-destructive streak, they could never be the other.

Dreams

For such a dreamlike text, actual experiential dreams play a comparatively small part in *Идиот*. This is largely because at times it is difficult to definitively discern dream from reality in the epileptic mode of consciousness that the novel conveys.

Nevertheless, there are two identifiable anxiety dreams that can be analysed. The first is a straightforward anxiety dream over the Epanchins' party, which Myshkin fears he will ruin. Aglaia has already warned him not to go anywhere near a valuable vase: but her foresight goes unheeded and Myshkin knocks over the ornament as a seizure strikes him. The dream also serves as a premonition of the event:

> Что, если завтра, при всех, с ним случится припадок? … Он бледнел от этой мысли; всю ночь он представлял себя в каком-то чудном и неслыханном обществе, между какими-то странными людьми. Главное то, что он «заговорил»; он знал, что не надо говорить, но он всё время говорил, он в чем-то их уговаривал. Евгений Павлович и Ипполит были тоже в числе гостей и казались в чрезвычайной дружбе. (8:437)

It is Myshkin's anti-Catholic outburst, which he cannot seem to contain, that begins the process towards seizure. There is so much foreboding surrounding the party that, when the fit happens, it seems tragically inevitable. In an unexplained aside in the dream, Myshkin also seems to fear some sort of conspiracy between Radomskii and Ippolit, as if he is anxious their combined intellect could somehow turn against him.

There are also Myshkin's multiple dreams of a woman – some sort of composite between Aglaia and Nastas'ia – that he experiences as he sits on a park bench in Pavlovsk, his mind weaving in and out of consciousness. Despite the composite character, the dreams seem to symbolise his concern over Nastas'ia. Throughout *Идиот* there is a sense that she is a doomed woman, subject to her desires through Rogozhin yet seeking redemption in the Prince. Myshkin's dream picks up on this and displays his innate understanding: 'он чувствовал, что тотчас же произойдет что-то ужасное', and 'в этом лице было столько раскаяния и ужасу, что казалось – это была страшная преступница и только что сделала ужасное преступление.' (8:352)

But ultimately, in Myshkin's dream, 'ни за что, ни за что не хотел признать ее за преступницу' (8:352). Despite his concern and sense of helplessness over the woman he feels a connection to, her 'ужас' and 'раскаяние' make him believe that somehow she can still be saved. This in turn displays Myshkin's somewhat naïve belief in the ideal of beauty – naïve in that this ideal is not to be found in the higher circles of Russian society; and also that Nastas'ia's disturbed past means she will never reach this ideal on a psychological level. Yet he is in total thrall to this idea and cannot admit that it could in any way be fallible.

The Prince's concern is made even more apparent by the fact that the same woman comes to him in a dream shortly after; and here the narrator implies Myshkin's confusion over Nastas'ia by referring to her as a 'преступница' (8:377), but

ambiguously, within quotation marks. These two different views of the same woman echo Nastas'ia's simultaneous desire to be saved by the prince and destroyed by Rogozhin. Oddly, he wakes up to find Aglaia sitting beside him, laughing. Perhaps the prince has registered her presence on a subconscious level, and that it is in fact she who is the ideal of beauty that the prince must save – from the vices that a pampered upbringing carries, including her arrogant, headstrong haughtiness. In any case, the prince's dreams on the Pavlovsk bench seem to merge with the confused dreamlike nature of the park setting, and their true meaning is difficult to ascertain because they retain a confused atmosphere in themselves.

While there are no dreams of catharsis or peripateia in the novel – the ecstatic aura stands in for these subconscious experiences with its sheer power and climactic nature – certain functions of the epileptic condition can be connected with Dostoevskii's dreams of the Golden Age, which *Идиот* predates. Certainly, the aura gives a sense of paradisiacal happiness that the Golden Age bestows on the dreamer – yet is followed by a dramatic turning point that equates to the agony of seizure.

Additionally, in his seeming embodiment of the 'positively beautiful', Myshkin is a forebear of one of those inhabitants of the pre-lapsarian world described in 'Сон смешного человека', who live in selfless harmony. Quoting Dostoevskii's use of the Gospel of Matthew in his notebooks as he sits by the body of his dead first wife before her burial – 'Не женятся и не посягают, а живут, как ангелы божии'[385] – Frank sees a positive goal for humanity in both the vision of the aura and of the Golden Age: 'The "final ideal goal" of humanity is thus the total fusion of the individual Ego with All in a mystic community literally (and not metaphorically) freed from the constraints and limits of the flesh; it is the transcendent "synthesis" that Myshkin had glimpsed in the ravishment of the pre-epileptic aura.'[386] This is what awaits humanity in heaven, and is consequently towards what humanity must strive. That these visions are connected intimately to Dostoevskii's view of spirituality is made even clearer by Steven Cassedy, who refers to the author's emotional and insightful passages that detail his thoughts as he sits beside Mariia

[385] In *Литературное наследство*, 83, p. 173
[386] Frank, *The Miraculous Years*, p. 337

Dmitrievna's coffin. Dostoevskii extols the impossibility of true love for another while man has an ego, and says this may only be possible in heaven. Cassedy writes:

> The path to the actual seizure is exactly like the path that earthly beings follow as they approach 'Christ's heaven'. In the Masha entry, down here is all history and development. For Myshkin, down here all is physicality and disease. In the Masha entry, the goal may be reached only at the cost of the self, which then becomes lost in a higher fusion. For Myshkin, the goal may be reached only at the cost of consciousness (essentially the same thing as 'the self'), which then becomes lost in a higher fusion. In both instances, whether we're speaking of the *I* or of consciousness, the being that knows it's approaching the goal will never know it has reached the goal (if it does), since exactly the properties that allow it to know it's approaching must disappear once it gets there. In the Masha entry, it's a law of nature that down here we're condemned to the limitations of our individuality, even though through our individual consciousness we enjoy the sensations our physical nature allows us. For Myshkin, it's a law of nature that down here an epileptic is condemned to yet more pronounced limitations than healthy people, even though the illness affords an approach to something very much like the absolute. For the grieving Dostoevsky, the limitations of the *I* were a sign of the impossibility of perfect Christian love. For Myshkin, the limitations of the individual consciousness are not necessarily a *sign* of the impossibility of brotherly love, but they are closely associated with an illustration of this impossibility: it's precisely Myshkin's 'brother' who assaults him and precipitates the epileptic seizure. Assault and seizure both demonstrate the unattainability of the ideal.[387]

Both the Ridiculous Man and Myshkin have had glimpses of heaven in both their visions. However, between them there is a role reversal, for, instead of the fallen man entering paradise, in *Идиот* the selfless pre-lapsarian enters the self-conscious post-lapsarian world of St Petersburg. 'He offers by his very presence an image of man before the fall, living outside the worldly restrictions of time, space and causality'[388]. He offers the fallen an image of perfection in his recounting of the aura, instead of the society showing the Ridiculous Man their perfection. And although Myshkin subconsciously may change people for the better, he has little impact on the final outcome of events in the text – unlike the Ridiculous Man's devastating effect on the parallel earth he enters. Ultimately, Myshkin's blessing and curse is his disease, which bestows him with images of perfection, but which means he is ultimately

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[387] Steven Cassedy, *Dostoevsky's Religion*, Stanford University Press, 2005, pp. 126-27
[388] Slattery, p. 9

imperfect and cannot hope to fully effect change, not even in his quest to save Nastas'ia. Slattery concludes that 'he is diseased, tainted by the body's imperfections. His own embodiment defies, challenges his dream of perfection. … His dream of perfection is challenged tacitly by the flesh.'[389]

There is a further parallel between Myshkin and the Ridiculous Man: the fact that their paradisiacal visions are beyond earthly communication. Morson writes: 'The ridiculous man's recognition that he "lost the words" to describe the "live image" possessing his soul is comparable to the Idiot's regret that his visions are ultimately beyond language and therefore beyond sharing.'[390] There is a common sense of frustration that comes with being a 'chosen one', so to speak, in not being able to fully put across the power of the ideal that has been witnessed. There is also a sense of loneliness: the Ridiculous Man is shunned and mocked by society after his dream, and Myshkin can never be said to have a proper friend, outside perhaps the young, devoted Kolia Ivolgin. Such children, unaffected by adult cynicism and rationalism, seem to be the only members of society who can appreciate the images of perfection that these men preach. The Ridiculous Man, too, indicates he has found the girl he previously dismissed, although her opinion of his reformed character is unknown.

Finally, Jacques Catteau remarks on the similarity in both the aura and the Golden Age to escape the present to an era or image of eternal timelessness – the eternal myth of paradise, or the eternal harmony of whatever lays beyond: 'Eternity seen during the epileptic aura, in the minutes before death, in the dream Utopia of the Golden Age, is a haven in living time … a nirvana where freedom is diluted in universal harmony'[391]. Such similarities of power inherent in the Golden Age and the ecstatic aura are also made dramatically apparent by Robert Jackson:

> The dream of the ridiculous man is the age-old search in darkness for light, for the meaning and purpose of existence. His dream, as a psychic phenomenon … establishes a purely spatial field of man's search. In its moral and spiritual content, this dream involves a repetition of mythopoetic experience … Man does not move forward along a temporal line to some point in the future; rather, he is continually discovering

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[389] Ibid., p. 10
[390] Gary Saul Morson, *The Boundaries of Genre – Dostoevsky's* Diary of a Writer *and the Traditions of Literary Utopia*, University of Texas Press, Austin, 1981, p. 178
[391] Catteau, pp. 380-81

> himself anew, reiterating primary experience. In this movement toward self-discovery man overcomes and annihilates time. Indeed, the ecstatic dream of higher Beauty, which the ridiculous man experiences visually and which Myshkin in *The Idiot* experiences visually in a moment of psychic transfiguration, announces that 'there shall be no more time'.[392]

Epilepsy in other characters

Despite an apparent scarcity of epileptic figures in his decades of work – Myshkin, Kirillov and Smerdiakov are the only three detailed examples – prodromal, post-ictal or inter-ictal symptoms are discernible in many of Dostoevskii's characters, whether they, or indeed he, was aware of them or not. This lends most, or indeed all of his novels a dreamlike intensity, according to Rice: 'the narrative perception of such characters (and elsewhere their self-perceptions) impart to Dostoevsky's fictional world an unnervingly frenetic quality of "suddenness"'[393]. Consequently, there certainly seems to have been an unconscious transference of epileptic symptoms between author and character, whether these were symptoms experienced or read about in the medical journals of the day.

Ordynov, for example, is judged by Murin to have the 'черная немочь' (1:304), which may indeed explain his extended periods of hazy, dreamlike wanderings, his sudden losses of consciousness, and vivid yet fractured dreams. Murin's epilepsy, on the other hand, lends him a greater mystical air, but also humanises his archetypal character. Ordynov witnesses one of his fits and then sees him as a sick old man being attended to by Katerina, one of the few fleeting moments of apparent objective reality in this predominantly clouded, dreamlike text.

From showing Ordynov's symptoms alone, Raskol'nikov is another who may unknowingly have latent epilepsy, or the disease in its early stages. Henry Buchanan even posits that Raskol'nikov experiences the epileptic aura during *Преступление и наказание*, although Buchanan's assertion that critics' focus on *Идиот* as Dostoevskii's definitive study of the epileptic condition 'may well turn out to be one of the biggest mistakes in literary history'[394] is perhaps overstating his theory. While

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[392] Jackson, *The Art of Dostoevsky*, p. 293
[393] Rice, p. 254
[394] Buchanan, p. 2

symptoms of both aura and particularly prodrome are evident, they are nowhere near as detailed and certain as in the case of Myshkin, or for that matter Kirillov; and in any case, Buchanan himself asserts that Raskol'nikov's condition is an 'incomplete' or 'light manifestation' of temporal lobe epilepsy, and not the fully developed illness of Myshkin. Raskol'nikov does, however, display many symptoms of the epileptic, his symptoms worsened by his malnutrition, general poverty and psychological stress brought on by the obsession with his 'идея'. These include his paleness, attacks of speechlessness or difficulty speaking and his frequent faintness, all of which can be accounted for by a partial seizure. But they can, of course, be construed as signs of other conditions, such as simple exhaustion.

Buchanan's most compelling argument is his account of Raskol'nikov's experience of the epileptic aura, which the critic says occurs after he returns to his flat following the artisan's accusation of him as a murderer. Buchanan writes:

> This is not some random account of consciousness, but a highly structured passage in which each phrase refers either to incidents from Raskolnikov's life or to the psycho-sensorial disturbances associated with epilepsy. The 'thoughts or scraps of thoughts', these 'vague ideas without order or connexion' – this is a phenomenon experienced by many epileptics, and is commonly reported in the medical textbooks; 'the faces of people he had seen as a child … and whom he never would have remembered' – increased memory capacity is a standard feature of a seizure, which suggests that it is indeed some altered state of consciousness taking place; 'the belfry of Voznesensky church' – this would recall Raskolnikov's emotionally traumatic epiphany from Voznesensky bridge which has felled him to the ground; 'a billiard table in some low class public house, and an army officer standing beside it' – this refers to the crucial conversation between the officer and the student; 'the smell of cigars' – epileptics often experience a strange sensation of smell or taste just before or after an attack; 'the ringing of Sunday church-bells' … akin to the celebrated ringing sound heard by Mohammed in those mystical seconds before a divine revelation by Allah. Raskolnikov is given the whole range of psycho-sensorial disturbances, hallucinations and increased memory capacity associated with a seizure; the Great Convulsive fit … is not reported, but this could be taken to substantiate Dostoevsky's perception of the variable manifestations of epilepsy – that it can occur in a partial form, without the convulsive symptoms.[395]

[395] Ibid., pp. 13-15

It is a convincing argument, and it is very possible that Dostoevskii used many of his own experiences of epilepsy to augment Raskol'nikov's disordered state of mind. He very well may be a latent epileptic – the condition can indeed develop in early adulthood – and may have experienced at this moment a partial seizure. However, like the previous symptoms there are also other, simpler diagnoses stemming from Raskol'nikov's physical and mental exhaustion and his obsessive monomania. These symptoms nevertheless do show how epilepsy is discernibly manifest in Dostoevskii's works.

Ivan Petrovich in *Униженные и оскорбленные*, who draws so many parallels with the Dostoevskii of the 1840s, also shares some of the author's symptoms of the era – lethargy, dizziness, contemplative, dreamlike states and *мистический ужас* to name but a few – which, according to Dr Ianovskii, could well have been early warnings of epilepsy. It also displays Dostoevskii's first use of epilepsy as a structural device, in its effect on Nelli. While her seizures are not clearly defined, her behaviour is consistent with that of the epileptic, 'with her extreme irritability, restlessness and unstable temperament'[396]. It also coincides with other elements, 'with the storm, the growing darkness, the poignant intensity of her last confession, which all marked the rise of emotion.'[397] Leonard Kent also displays how her seizures are used as a subconscious safety mechanism in their ability to remove her from reality, foreshadowing the selfsame functions of Myshkin's fits, which save him from possible murder, and then a social situation in which he feels he does not belong and feels trapped. But for Nelli, in her downtrodden position, 'it removes her from the rational world at the precise moment when its agony becomes totally unbearable.'[398]

Jacques Catteau highlights many indications that Dostoevskii utilised epilepsy in a more hidden guise following *Идиот*. His best example is that of Stavrogin, whose strange, impulsive, and quite scandalous actions against provincial officials can be attributed to outbursts of inter-ictal 'epileptic fury'. At least the first example, in which he pulls the nose of one official without any provocation or warning, is followed by a fever. He bites the ear of another and kisses the wife of a third – yet,

[396] Kravchenko, p. 88
[397] Catteau, p. 122
[398] Kent, p. 111

he claims to have forgotten each episode, perhaps quite honestly if he was indeed epileptic. Such inter-ictal outbursts have been recorded in reality and equate to minor seizures in terms of brain activity;[399] so, like the events of the seizure, they are almost always forgotten. There is also the quietly terrifying scene in which Stavrogin is described fast asleep, sitting perfectly upright, as if in some sort of trance. Again, a diagnosis can by no means be definitively confirmed from these symptoms, but they add to what Catteau calls the 'halo of mystery' surrounding Stavrogin. 'The more unusual, unexpected, even ridiculous his conduct is, the more disturbing it is to the imagination. This was the creative line, the "tone", as Dostoevsky says, which a masked epilepsy helped to create.'[400]

Dostoevskii's last portrayal of epilepsy was through Smerdiakov, but even though he uses his affliction to evade suspicion following his murder of Fedor Karamazov by feigning a fit, the reader has no direct experience of his illness or its effects. The illness here is stripped of its mystique: there is no incredible aura or dreamlike atmosphere, just an illness used as an alibi by a murderer. However, indications of the epileptic aura can be seen in Alesha Karamazov's epiphany outside the monastery, following his dream of Father Zosima. The language of the passage is strikingly similar to Dostoevskii's fictional descriptions of the aura: 'Тишина земная как бы сливалась с небесною, тайна земная соприкасалась со звездною… Алеша стоял, смотрел и вдруг как подкошенный повергся на землю. […] Как будто нити ото всех этих бесчисленных миров божиих сошлись разом в душе его, и она вся трепетала, «соприкасаясь мирам иным».' (14:328) Indeed, Alesha's experience mirrors that of an epileptic: firstly his almost prodromal nervous anxiety over his brothers and loss of faith before his vision, followed by his descent into a dreamlike state during prayer. However, the aura-like vision has a positive effect on Alesha and its aftermath makes him stronger, not weaker. There is no sense of *мистический ужас* here, the spectre of mortality which comes to the fore in the rapid decay of Zosima's body. Instead there is mystic wonder, and a noticeable lack of fear of death.

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[399] See T. Alajouanine, 'Dostoevsky's Epilepsy,' *Brain*, 1963, 86, 2 (June), 209-18; also Rice, pp. 238-39
[400] Catteau, p. 127

With its epileptic overtones, this passage displays what Dostoevskii perhaps believed the condition of epilepsy could provide at its most positive. Interestingly, after Alesha's exit from Zosima's chamber, there is no mention of Christ in his experience; he is merely implied. This lends further weight to this moment's having a deep, subconscious power that the one who experiences it cannot attribute directly to spirituality. The aura is a connectivity to *all* of life, of which spirituality was in Dostoevskii's view a crucial, but not all-consuming part.

Many of these 'symptoms' throughout Dostoevskii's works are, of course, conjecture, and could simply be signs of delirious or mental illness; yet these conditions too are possible manifestations of epilepsy. Ultimately, it seems likely, and it would be foolish to rule out, that Dostoevskii would employ his own experiences of the varying stages of epilepsy as at the very least a basis for imagery of the subconscious throughout his works.

Dostoevskii

Dostoevskii's affliction has been the focus of much debate, not least because its origins are so unclear. Even the precise timing of his first epileptic fit is open to question: the writer himself places the event in the Siberian prison camp, confirmed by a medical report that dates the seizure to 1850; although another second-hand account has it occurring in Semipalatinsk after his release.[401] Others, most persuasively Dr Stepan Ianovskii, argue that his nervous illnesses and fainting fits ('кондрашки', as Dostoevskii described these neurological attacks) of the 1840s, and even earlier symptoms, were advance signs of epilepsy.[402] Shortly after Dostoevskii's death, the doctor wrote about his early ailments including 'кондрашка с ветерком' – literally, 'with a breeze,' translating as an aura-like sensation that passed from the extremities to the head.

> *Kondrashka with an aura* … served F. M., ever excessively alert for signs of illness, as the premonition of a seizure. … And in essence, this is one of the characteristic symptoms of *Epilepsia*. For me, as a doctor, it was clear that our dear friend was suffering from falling sickness.

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[401] See Frank, *The Years of Ordeal*, p. 80
[402] See Frank, *The Seeds of Revolt*, p. 165

> Incidentally, even at that time on several occasions the illness appeared not only in a form that was unmistakable, but even in such an acute degree that it posed a seriously dangerous threat to the patient's life…[403]

What is centrally relevant to this thesis in terms of 'падучая болезнь' is the psychological and subconscious effects of epilepsy on Dostoevskii. Unfortunately the most interesting aspect, that of the pre-fit aura, is only ever briefly documented by the writer himself. One example is found in a letter to Anna Grigor'evna from Bad Ems in 1876, in which he writes: 'Вчера и третьего дня начинал чувствовать как бы наступление припадка, то есть захватывало душу, как бывает в последнее мгновение перед припадком, когда он случался наяву.' (29/2:99)

The connotations here can be construed both positively and negatively: respectively, the removal of the soul to another, higher plane; or its incapacitation, or even obliteration in its removal. This passage also reveals why Dostoevskii's experience of the ecstatic aura may have been limited: most of his fits occurred while he was asleep. This raises the implication that the powerful subconscious imagery of the aura may have had some impact on the dreams Dostoevskii had. The power of his dreams that have previously been discussed may well have been augmented by nocturnal seizures – but it is important to stress that this is purely conjecture, as there has been no apparent attempt to measure the effects of nocturnal seizures on dream imagery, were it possible to do so at all. (The very symptom of memory loss in epilepsy, combined with the transitory nature of dreams, suggests that remembering such imagery may not be at all possible.)

Despite Dostoevskii's lack of documentation of the aura, Strakhov's memoirs seem to suggest that the author brought up the subject a lot more in conversation than he did in his non-fiction. Strakhov in fact gives a second-hand account of the sensations of the aura:

> Много раз мне рассказывал Федор Михайлович, что перед припадком у него бывают минуты восторженного состояния. «На несколько мгновений,– говорил он,– я испытываю такое счастие, которое невозможно в обыкновенном состоянии и о котором не имеют понятия другие люди. Я чувствую полную гармонию в себе и

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[403] Quoted in, and translated by, Rice, p. 7; from С. Д. Яновский, 'Болезнь Ф. М. Достоевского,' *Новое время*, no. 1793 (Петербург, Февраль 24, 1881)

> во всем мире, и это чувство так сильно и сладко, что за несколько секунд такого блаженства можно отдать десять лет жизни, пожалуй, всю жизнь».[404]

It is evidently clear that the waking fits Dostoevskii did experience certainly affected him enough to pass on the aura's sensation of all-consuming connectivity to Myshkin and Kirillov, who detail the aura's effects better than Dostoevskii ever did in relation to himself. Perhaps he felt as if such an extraordinary power could only be conveyed fully through fiction, as an extremity of his fantastic realism.

It is interesting to note that Dostoevskii even considers such moments of bliss to be worth 'десять лет жизни, пожалуй, всю жизнь'. As a man who felt deeply, spiritually, about the miracle of life – and, we have seen, led an extraordinarily intense life and felt each twist and turn to an intensely emotional degree – this is a remarkably strong statement. The aura almost seems like a glimpse of the afterlife, of heaven, or wherever 'время больше не будет'. It is therefore very understandable that Dostoevskii fell into deep depression or melancholy following every fit. To have such a sensation of other-worldly bliss suddenly snatched away by the trauma of the fit, and its consequent aches and pains, must be terrible to endure.

Any research using secondary accounts cannot, naturally, be too careful in judging their legitimacy in describing Dostoevskii's own sensations. Indeed, they are mostly drawn from memoirs and reminiscences, which may be coloured (intentionally or otherwise) by passages of Dostoevskii's works. Strakhov himself has shown himself to be a less than reliable historian[405] and his retelling of Dostoevskii's ecstatic aura perhaps draws too many similarities to Myshkin's and Kirillov's. Another second-hand account in which Dostoevskii talks about the aura shows why such evidence must be treated with caution.

In her reminisces of Dostoevskii, Sof'ia Kovalevskaia recalls a time when the writer, visiting her home as a guest, told her and her sister of his first epileptic fit. He said it had taken place on the eve of Easter in Siberia after his release from prison, and was the culmination of a heated argument with an atheist acquaintance on the existence of

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[404] Тюнькин (ed.), *Ф. М. Достоевский в воспоминаниях современников*, 1, p. 412
[405] As his highly questionable account of Dostoevskii molesting a child has shown (see Frank, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, p. 140n).

God. The aura, Kovalevskaia records Dostoevskii saying, was felt upon the first chiming of the bells to mark Easter Day:

> – Есть Бог, есть! – закричал, наконец, Достоевский вне себя от возбуждения. В эту самую минуту ударили колокола соседней церкви к светлой Христовой заутрене. Воздух весь загудел и заколыхался.
>
> – И я почувствовал,– рассказывал Федор Михайлович,– что небо сошло на землю и поглотило меня. Я реально постиг Бога и проникнулся им. Да, есть Бог! – закричал я, и больше ничего не помню.[406]

No other mention of such an incident is made anywhere else; it seems likely that the story was either improvised by Dostoevskii to impress his audience, or was a complete creation by Kovalevskaia. (It should be borne in mind that Dostoevskii related his dubious 'premonitory' dream of the stopped clock and the subsequent death of his aunt to the same person.) Her account continues with Dostoevskii describing the intense happiness of the aura and likening it to the prophet Mohammed's glimpse of paradise in the Koran:

> такое счастье, то счастье, которое испытываем мы, эпилептики, за секунду перед припадком. Магомет уверяет в своем Коране, что видел рай и был в нем. … Он действительно был в раю в припадке падучей, которою страдал, как и я. Не знаю, длится ли это блаженство секунды, или часы, или месяцы, но, верьте слову, все радости, которые может дать жизнь, не взял бы я за него![407]

This passage is very similar to Myshkin's description of the aura in *Идиот*. It is perhaps no less likely that Dostoevskii actually improvised these rapturous words than that they were adapted from his novel by Kovalevskaia (Frank also notices some similarities to Goethe's *Faust*[408]).

Rice draws attention to one other, more reliable, second-hand account of Dostoevskii's description of the aura, which differs somewhat from the previous examples by adding a sensual aspect to its ecstasy. The account is by Baron Vrangel', the author's friend during his Siberian exile, who writes: 'Приближение их он чувствовал и говорил, что перед приступом его тело охватывает какое-то

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[406] Тюнькин (ed.), *Ф. М. Достоевский в воспоминаниях современников*, 2, p. 27
[407] Ibid.
[408] Frank, *The Miraculous Years*, pp. 20-21

невыразимое чувство сладострастия.'[409] Vrangel''s account is compelling because of its marked difference from the accounts of Strakhov and Kovalevskaia and others, which seem embellished with details from Dostoevskii's fiction, and which have a hint of an established tale that the author may have spun out by rote when pressed on the issue. As Rice states, 'it presents an ecstatic aura which seems organically immediate, frankly expressed, and without poetic flourishes'[410]. In addition, the aspect of the aura's sensuality may have in fact embarrassed the rather prudish Dostoevskii, who found that he could only confide such feelings to a male friend as close as Vrangel' had become.[411] As such, it adds weight to the argument that Dostoevskii did indeed experience an ecstatic aura.

It must be stressed that, in all cases, these reminiscences display the intensity of the writer's experience. The memoirs of many other contemporaries at the very least mention Dostoevskii's experience of the aura, so we must conclude that it was something he freely spoke of. Indeed, perhaps it was the writer himself, who so often got carried away in tales, who exaggerated the power of the experience; the aura in its ecstatic form, we must remember, has been only rarely recorded. Yet even experiencing the ecstatic aura once, at even a fraction of the power he documents, would undoubtedly have been enough to fire the mind of such an imaginative writer. From Dostoevskii's own words, in a notebook of 1875, there is another incident that must be mentioned:

> 8-го апреля Припад [утром] в ½ [второго] первого по-полуночи. Предчувствоал сильно с вечера да и вчера. Только что сделал папиросы и хотел сесть. Чтобы хоть 2 страницы написать романа, как *помню* полетел, ходя среди комнаты. Пролежал 40 минут. Очнулся сидя за папиросами, но не делал их. Не помню, как очутилось у меня в руках перо, а пером я разодрал портсигар. Мог заколоться.[412]

This peculiar sensation of 'flying' ('полетел') is certainly unique in Dostoevskii's descriptions of the aura, fictional or non-fictional. Even though it may only describe

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[409] А. Е. Врангель, *Воспоминания о Ф. М. Достоевском в Сибири 1854-56 гг.,* Санкт-Петербург, 1912, p. 37
[410] Rice, pp. 84-85
[411] The only other inkling we have of his sexual desires is found in letters to his second wife, almost all of which she censored.
[412] In *Литературное наследство*, 83, p. 350

light-headedness, it also conveys a sense of subconscious transcendence. However, once again, there is no mention of intense joy or connectivity; the notes are rather impassive and simply document physical actions, not sensations. If the second-hand accounts of the author's ecstatic aura are to be fully believed, one here would at least expect a few notes detailing 'счастие' or 'гармония'. The emphasis here is on the 'flying', which hints that it is an unusual epileptic symptom for Dostoevskii.

The passage also affords a better view of Dostoevskii's experience of prodromal and post-ictal sensations. The mechanical rolling of cigarettes, for example, echoes the prince's mechanical wandering of St Petersburg's streets, and is carried over into the post-ictal scenario. Most notable, however, is a strong premonition of the impending fit (often by a matter of days), a gift which he also bestows on Myshkin. He mentions his fear of an oncoming attack in much of his correspondence – 'Сажусь теперь за работу, тогда как в голове туман, и несомненно жду припадка,'(29/1:218) he writes to Sof'ia Kovalevskaia in 1871; and to Anna Grigor'evna on various occasions: 'О будущем и думать не хочется: голова кружится и боюсь припадка,' (29/1:274); 'Весь ужасно изломан, припадков не было, но боюсь, что будут, пора' (30/1:36); and 'Ночью начались у меня вздрагивания, боюсь очень припадка,' (30/1:93) – but, again, it is the passages in his notebooks that provide the strongest evidence of actual occurrence; for, with nobody intended to read these pages, Dostoevskii would have nothing to gain from them.

A detailed account of Dostoevskii's epileptic foreboding is also to be found in the reminiscences of Mikhail Aleksandrovich Aleksandrov, the chief typesetter at the firm that printed the journal *Гражданин* at the time Dostoevskii was its editor. Although he was never witness to one of Dostoevskii's attacks, he writes, Anna told him of her husband's meticulous preparations as soon as he felt that a fit was impending:

> При появлении известных предвестников принимались всевозможные предосторожности: так, между прочим, Федор Михайлович несколько дней не выходил из дома; днем домашние, то есть главным образом Анна Григорьевна, следили за ним, а на ночь возле его постели на диване стлалась другая постель на полу, на случай припадка во время сна. Благодаря этим предосторожностям, опасные последствия припадков предупреждались и тем самым смягчались, иначе легко могло

случиться, что Федор Михайлович мог в припадке упасть на улице и разбиться о камни.[413]

It is clear that Dostoevskii therefore took his forebodings very seriously, and that the threat of a fit was a very real fear in his life; as the fact that a fit can strike at any time would understandably be in any epileptic. But Dostoevskii's foreboding seems more than simply the threat of impending, inevitable pain. It almost seems to take on an intense, dreamlike atmosphere surrounding him. It is in this sense that there lies a case for Dostoevskii's illness of the 1840s being the forerunner of his epilepsy – for both seem to exude the sense of *мистический ужас* that he describes in fictional works written before and after Siberia; most notably in the almost autobiographical character of Ivan in *Униженные и оскорбленные*.

One witness to such an atmosphere was N. Fon-Fokht, a frequent guest at the estate of Dostoevskii's sister and brother-in-law, the Ivanovs, in Liublino near Moscow. On one occasion, Dostoevskii invited Fon-Fokht to spend the night at the dacha he was staying in nearby. The latter vividly conjures up his feelings settling down to sleep on the sofa in the spare room:

> Мертвая тишина, царствовавшая в доме, тихие шаги Федора Михайловича в соседней комнате и иногда достигавшие до меня его тихие вздохи и даже как будто какой-то шепот, раздававшийся по временам в его комнате, взволновали меня, и я, при всем старании, никак не мог заснуть. Мною начал овладевать даже какой-то непонятный страх, и я слышал биение своего юного сердца. Так прошло с добрый час. Вдруг шаги Федора Михайловича начали приближаться к моей комнате, затем тихо отворилась дверь, и я увидел бледную фигуру Достоевского со свечкою в руках. Я невольно вздрогнул и приподнялся на диване.
>
> – Послушайте,– дрожащим голосом проговорил Достоевский, – если со мною случится в эту ночь припадок, то вы не бойтесь, не подымайте тревоги и не давайте знать Ивановым.
>
> С последними словами Федор Михайлович притворил дверь и удалился в свою комнату. Как молодому юноше, мне в ту минуту сделалось невыразимо страшно, я боялся видеть и слышать об этой болезни … а тут приходилось с минуты на минуту ожидать, что вот-вот Федор Михайлович упадет … Сон далеко отлетел от меня, и я весь обратился в напряженный, тревожный слух. … Я старался думать о чем-нибудь постороннем, но за какую бы мысль я ни

[413] Тюнькин (ed.), *Ф. М. Достоевский в воспоминаниях современников*, 2, pp. 285-86

> хватался, фигура Достоевского со свечкою в руках постоянно возвращала меня на прежние ожидания припадка. Ужасная ночь![414]

Fon-Fokht's state of fear is so great that he then gets terribly frightened by the noise of an approaching train. Such a state of anxiety clearly stems from the fear of witnessing an epileptic attack, but it is interesting to note that Fon-Fokht feels a sense of fear even before Dostoevskii visits his room – as if the threat of an impending fit emits an atmosphere of anxiety. Interestingly, Dostoevskii tells Fon-Fokht the next morning that he ended up not having a fit that night, even though he had a premonition of it. Perhaps Dostoevskii had managed to unconsciously control its onset somehow, to spare the panic of his young guest.

There is one other eyewitness account of note, which evidently shows Dostoevskii in a trance-like prodromal state preceding the aura and fit. There does not seem to be any other record of Dostoevskii in this state; even Anna's many accounts only detail a preceding moment of confusion. But A. G. Shile's description of meeting the writer at his house is interesting not least because Dostoevskii remains in a confused state for at least ten minutes. He writes:

> Я вошла в небольшую комнату, рядом с кабинетом Федора Михайловича, и застала его сидевшим перед ломберным столом, спиной к дверям, барабанившим пальцами по столу и тихо напевавшим французский романс: «Et rose, elle a vécu, [Ce que vivent les roses, L'éspace d'un matin»].
>
> Он так был углублен в свои мечты о чем-то, что не слышал моих шагов. Я подошла к нему, он был страшно бледен и, видимо, не узнал меня, хотя смотрел на меня в упор какими-то странными глазами. … Не прошло и десяти минут, как с Федором Михайловичем начался припадок эпилепсии.[415]

It is therefore easy to see where Dostoevskii got his inspiration for Myshkin's confused wanderings around St Petersburg before his first fit in *Идиот*. The distractedness, the half-forgotten foreign verses, the confused memory – all are present in this account.

Despite the forewarnings, epilepsy is by no means a condition that runs to a set timetable – attacks can come on at any time, and sometimes with very little warning

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[414] Ibid., pp. 51-52
[415] In С. В. Белов (ed.), *Ф. М. Достоевский в забытых и неизвестных воспоминаниях современников*, Андреев и сыновья, Санкт-Петербург, 1993, p. 173

at all. Judging from Dostoevskii's non-fiction alone, there are some obvious external 'triggers' of epilepsy, which result in an upsetting of the nerves and seem to help induce a fit or increase their frequency.

One undeniable factor that strained his nerves and consequently worsened his epilepsy was the stress of his workload, so often self-induced. It seems at times that Dostoevskii purposefully exacerbated his epilepsy with his work, as if this was some sort of self-punishment. Certainly, Dostoevskii from a young age always felt the urge to write creatively. When it became his *raison d'être* and the source of his financial income, it took on a different aspect. As his success grew, so did the intensity of his fits. This is entirely explainable in medical terms, as epilepsy does in many cases increase in severity over time.[416] Yet for Dostoevskii, his condition became somehow inextricably linked with his profession. Writing could be cathartic, but the whole process increasingly strained his nerves. 'Знайте, что я завален работой,' he writes to A. F. Gerasimova in 1877. 'Кроме срочной работы с моим «Дневником», я завален перепиской. (…) Я выдержал *три* припадка моей падучей болезни, чего уже многие годы не бывало в такой силе и так часто.' (29/2:144-145)

This double-edged relationship with his chosen profession is documented as far back as his letters to Mikhail from prison before his exile – a desire to write, yet an acknowledgement of the dangers it brought. Dostoevskii, it seems, often sought to confront this danger by pushing his nerves to their limit, as if he wrote best in these fevered states. The cost of these bouts of intensity were, before his exile, nervous attacks, fainting fits, extreme anxiety; and afterwards, epileptic fits. 'Serial fits took place just at the same time as the most violent creative effort,' writes Catteau. 'This was not when the novel was being written down, which was comparatively easy, but during the tormented search for the right form, structure and composition.

> The conditions of Dostoevsky's life also played a part. First there was the work at night until four or five in the morning. All specialists in epilepsy stress the importance of regular sleep. If sleep time is reduced, fits become more frequent. Then there were the misfortunes of Dostoevsky's life, mourning, indebtedness, passion for gambling and other evils. When

[416] Kolb and Whishaw, p. 145

> Dostoevsky was working hardest to overcome the most difficult conditions, the rhythms of fits accelerated.[417]

There seems, then, to be an element of masochism in Dostoevskii's rather reckless pursuit of artistic perfection – he literally suffered for his art by employing a 'dialectic of creativity and self-destruction'[418] in the creative process. (This too was evident in the life he led, for example his self-destructive gambling impulse.) This is particularly apparent in his planning and writing of *Идиот*, during which he suffered frequent fits as he struggled with the novel's structure and characterisation. Even up to writing the novel's end, the author's work was interrupted by seizures. 'Последние главы я писал день и ночь, с тоской и беспокойством ужаснейшим,' he writes to Sof'ia Kovalevskaia. 'Последовали два припадка, и я все-таки на десять дней опоздал против назначенного последнего срока' (29/1:9-10). It is little surprise, then, that the novel seems to operate in a kind of epileptic rhythm, with its dreamlike passages coalescing into vivid, climactic events. The novel could be said to suffer from its structural deficiencies in places – such as the extended six-month break in narrated action after the single day of Part One – but then this too speaks of the author's epileptic condition. It manifests itself in the work through these 'deficiencies', and the work becomes an expression of the condition.

Преступление и наказание was also affected to a certain degree by this epileptic 'rhythm'. Dostoevskii writes to Father Ianyshev at the end of April 1866 towards the novel's completion: 'до того довел мою падучую болезнь, что если только неделю проработаю беспрерывно, то ударяет припадок, и я следующую неделю уже не могу взяться за перо, иначе, через два-три припадка – апоплексия.' (28/2:156) The growing burden of his *Дневник писателя* also led to an increased number of attacks, as many of his letters of 1877 testify, and even the conclusion of *Братья Карамазовы* was delayed after an attack on September 2 incapacitated him for eight days.[419]

Epilepsy ultimately became an integral part of Dostoevskii's experience of writing, and grew into a part of his creative process – as if he unconsciously connected the

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[417] Catteau, pp. 110-11
[418] Rice, p. 65
[419] Frank, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, p. 558

regularity and intensity of his fits with his own perceived success of his current work. If he went without fits for a while, he could work in peace – but would perhaps not be guaranteed the intensity desired.

> The negative effect of his writing upon his illness … is a characteristic complaint, and yet in other sources … Dostoevsky points instead to the acceleration and enhancement of his writing by the chronic and complex nervous disorder which seemed intermittently to precipitate epileptic seizures. The same disease process that appeared to sustain creativity also periodically threatened to terminate life. Such was the underlying pattern of the dialectic – the fluxions and limits – which governed Dostoevsky's life, an abnormally accelerated interplay of sickness and psyche.[420]

Epilepsy, in tandem with, and exacerbated by, the pressures of Dostoevskii's deadlines, therefore lends a distinct tension to many of his works. Catteau eloquently describes the effect of this intensity on the writer's style and technique, which he says are informed by 'a violent and convulsive impetus…

> The style is immediately striking: Dostoevsky overwhelms the reader by his analytic clarity and psychological frenzy. Euphemisms and diminutives (especially before 1849), repetitive adjectives meaning almost the same thing, superlatives, intriguing approximations, disturbing adverbs (suddenly, sharply, too much), triple repetition of words formed from the same root … all these elements show a kind of rage in the writer, an obsession with the idea, which is turned in all directions and explored to the point of exhaustion, a wish to compel, almost to bully the reader into adherence.[421]

There are other less unexplainable external factors that seem to 'trigger' Dostoevskii's epilepsy. A change in location is one more obvious factor, as climate certainly seems to have an effect on Dostoevskii's epilepsy: the frequency of his attacks decreased on each of his trips to Europe – sometimes not occurring for months at a time – particularly when he stayed in warmer cities such as Florence and Milan, and in the clean air of the rural, mountain towns of Vevey and Bad Ems. Ironically, the damp, humid, polluted climate of St Petersburg, built as it is on a swamp, seems to have been the worst of all for Dostoevskii's health; yet the whole process of travelling itself seems to have also increased the frequency of fits.

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[420] Rice, p. 33
[421] Catteau, p. 130

Beyond an avoidance of dampness and a proclivity for hot, dry areas, it is unclear exactly how climate affects epilepsy. Dostoevskii, as if attempting to solve this riddle, makes infrequent notes of the weather upon each logging of a fit in certain notebooks. Perhaps even more mysterious on first analysis are his many simultaneous mentions of the corresponding phase of the moon; until we take into account the medical train of thought that says epilepsy is, to a degree, governed by the lunar cycle, which it is likely Dostoevskii would have known about.[422] The writer's accounts of simultaneity between specific lunar phases and his fits are, however, patchy, and it seems Dostoevskii was grasping for a connection himself, as if trying to bestow some order upon an illness that could strike at any time.

In even more extreme examples, he occasionally connects his fits to traumatic external events. The news of an attempt on the tsar's life in 1867, while Dostoevskii was in Dresden, provoked great anxiety which led to an epileptic fit that night, according to Anna Grigor'evna.[423] Even stranger is the link Dostoevskii seems to make to the execution of a French child murderer called Tropman on January 7, 1870, which Dostoevskii must have read in the news later that day: 'Припадок в 6 часов утра (день и почти час казни Тропмана) Я его не слыхал, проснулся в 9-ом часу, с сознанием припадка. Голова болела, тело разбито.'[424] There are also mentions of the outbreak of war between France and Prussia weaved into these accounts, as if this too is connected somehow.

Such apparently random connections indicate that, instead of being entirely at the mercy of the lunar cycle's external control of epilepsy (which the author evidently believed in), Dostoevskii sees himself as some sort of lightning rod for events of magnitude, as if he is in some way in tune with the chaos of world events and is therefore qualified as an authority to report them and make authoritative judgements on them. Such a theory would certainly provide a link to Dostoevskii's later 'prophetic' statements on current affairs in *Дневник писателя*. It may in fact derive from the connectivity to humanity, the world and the universe that Dostoevskii

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[422] A notebook entry of October 20, 1870 even mentions the aurora borealis, as if this meteorological phenomenon may too have a connection.
[423] Достоевская, *Дневник 1867 года*, pp. 105-06
[424] Коншина (ed.), *Записные тетради Ф. М. Достоевского*, p. 81

describes in the epileptic aura. 'He seems to have held the view that at the electro-magnetic level there is some connection between man and the cosmos, a connection only made transparent in transcendental states like the "ecstatic aura".'[425]

Some recorded after-effects also have an unusual subconscious element, which may well have provided influence for some moments of clouded, dreamlike reality in Dostoevskii's fiction. The unconscious, primitive actions of Dostoevskii have already been noted, as have post-fit dreamlike states. It must, then, naturally be asked if Dostoevskii lived in a permanently dreamlike state as Myshkin may have. It is possible to link this detachedness from reality to the aloof nature of any writer, cut off as he or she may be from society by creating and inhabiting a fictional world. Dostoevskii certainly spent most of his days lost either in words – his own, other authors', the newspapers' – or in his own thoughts as he went on frequent strolls. While this could be attributed to a 'dreaminess' of character, it is likely the author's epilepsy contributed. Certainly, there are echoes of Myshkin's 'idiocy' in Dostoevskii's records of his own post-ictal sensations. Its 'cloudiness', as he described it, often lasted days. Such was his struggle of keeping in touch with reality at these times that on one occasion he withdrew an offer to attend a Christmas party at a mental hospital after a fit. 'очень болит голова, разбиты ноги и шея и хочется спать. К тому же чрезвычайно извращенные впечатления душевные. […] боюсь собою умножить их число' (30/1:137), he wrote, referring to the hospital's patients. Other accounts by Dostoevskii report: 'Фантастичность. Неясность, неправильные впечатления, разбиты ноги и руки'[426]; 'порванность мыслей, переселение в другие годы, мечтательность, задумчивость, виновность'[427]; and 'нервность, короткость памяти, усиленное и туманное, как-бы созерцательное состояние'[428]. In what may have been some of his first experiences of the aftermath of the *grand mal* fit, he writes to his brother Mikhail from Siberia in 1856 that he is in 'какое-то нравственно-униженное состояние' (28/1:247). All of these subconscious phenomena lasted for days at a time, leaving Dostoevskii in an almost

[425] Buchanan, p. 45
[426] *Литературное наследство*, 83, p. 625
[427] Ibid., p. 698
[428] Коншина (ed.), *Записные тетради Ф. М. Достоевского*, p. 81

permanent dreamlike state. Dostoevskii on occasion elaborates on these states of mind, and on his impressions immediately after the fit, when these sensations are at their strongest.

The account of his 'flying' fit on April 8, 1875 provides particularly interesting documentary details, this time of his subsequent behaviour. After a blank in his memory following the fit, Dostoevskii comes to tearing at his cigarette case with his pen, a confused action that mirrors the prodromal one. But now the action is conducted in a childlike or primitive manner, suggesting that through the powerful subconscious activity of the brain during the epileptic aura and fit, Dostoevskii has accessed a basic, primal area of his psyche, which then manifests itself in reality – his actions echoing the 'idiotic' state of Myshkin. It is fitting, too that in his confused and traumatised post-fit state he should turn to one of his constant comforts, tobacco. He then seeks out another, his wife Anna, only to be told by his maid Luker'ia that she is not in, a fact he knew very well beforehand. It is only at this point that he realises he has had a fit.

> Пошел будить уже 40 минут спустя Аню и удивился, услышав от Лукерьи, что барыня уехала. Подробно расспрашивал Лукерью, когда и зачем она уехала. […]
>
> Все время полного беспамятства, т. е. уже встав с полу, сидел и набивал папиросы, и по счету набил их 4, но не аккуратно, а в последние две папиросы почувствовал сильную головную боль, но долго не мог понять, что со мною, пока не пошел к Лукерье.[429]

Another account, from his 1870 notebook (dated January 29), runs:

> В три часа по полуночи припадок чрезвычайной силы, в сенях, на яву. Я упал и разбил себе лоб. Ничего не помня и не сознавая в совершенной целости принес однако же в комнату зажженную свечу и запер окно и потом уже догадался что у меня был припадок. Разбудил Аню и сказал ей; она очень плакала увидав мое лицо.[430]

An even more confused state of mind is evident in an account written to Anna Grigor'evna in 1877. The letter, written in Petersburg while she is in Staraia Russa with their children, initially describes a severe epileptic fit he suffers, and then its blurred aftermath when he awakens afterwards:

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[429] *Литературное наследство*, 83, p. 350
[430] Коншина (ed.), *Записные тетради Ф. М. Достоевского*, p. 81

> Сегодня в 6½ часов, очнувшись от припадка, пошел *к тебе*, и вдруг Прохоровна [the Dostoevskiis' nanny] говорит мне в зале, что барыни нету. – Где же она? – Да она в деревне на даче. – Как это можно? Она должна быть здесь, когда она уехала? – И едва поверил, когда Прохоровна уверила меня, что я сам только 3-го дня приехал. Как мне тяжело было давеча пробуждаться! (29/2:163)

These passages display the confusion and simultaneous instinctive drives – i.e. Dostoevskii seeking out his wife in a time of distress – of many of his characters in this state, more often than not a result of illness, and also their inability to comprehend that actual reality is not how they think it ought to be. Frank writes: 'Dostoevsky's remarkable capacity to depict such states of semiawareness and semiconsciousness, when a character, losing cognizance of his actual surroundings, behaves according to subliminal drives and impulses while still seeming to be lucid, evidently derives from such episodes in his own life.'[431] We only need to think of Raskol'nikov's fevered wanderings through St Petersburg, the dreamlike experiences of the ailing Ivan in *Униженные и оскорбленные*, and of course Prince Myshkin's common confusion, to draw parallels.

Other frequent after-effects of an epileptic fit for Dostoevskii were depression and fear of death. The fear of dying from an epileptic attack is not infrequently mentioned in Dostoevskii's correspondence, but this seems to be heightened to an unusually high degree after a fit, particularly those of the *grand mal* order, which can leave the body racked with intense pain. Anna Grigor'evna's first experience of her new husband's epilepsy were two severe fits in succession, the second of which left Dostoevskii screaming in pain: 'припадок повторился через час после первого, и на этот раз с такой силою, что Федор Михайлович более двух часов, уже придя в сознание, в голос кричал от боли. Это было что-то ужасное!'[432]

Dostoevskii's post-ictal depression is well-summed up in a letter from Siberia in 1857, at a time when he was most likely learning of the utter debilitation that arises from full-blown epilepsy, and the realisation that this incurable disease was to afflict him for the rest of his life. He writes to his first wife's sister, Varvara Konstant:

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[431] Frank, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, p. 245
[432] Достоевская, *Воспоминания*, p. 113

> Знаете ли, у меня есть какой-то предрассудок, предчувствие, что я должен скоро умереть. Такие предчувствия бывают почти всегда от мнительности; но уверяю вас, что я в этом случае не мнителен и уверенность моя в близкой смерти совершенно хладнокровная. Мне кажется, что я уже всё прожил на свете и что более ничего и не будет, к чему можно стремиться. (28/1:293)

Dostoevskii's passion, ambition, and overall zest for 'живая жизнь' (25:172) is nowhere to be seen in this passage of utter resignation. This alone is testament to the intensity of post-ictal depression.[433] The last sentence, however, reads ambiguously and could hint at Dostoevskii's experience of the ecstatic aura. In an echo of Kirillov's mindset, perhaps he believes here that, having witnessed the aura's intense joy, there is 'ничего не будет, к чему можно стремиться' in everyday life. The intensity of the aura was matched in Dostoevskii's life only by his predicted final moments before the firing squad in 1849. As de Jonge writes:

> Unfortunately, the memory of that level of existence, a level infinitely stronger, richer, more real than everyday reality, remains as something never to be forgotten. The result is that normal reality comes to appear intolerably flat. The moment of heightened experience is looked back to with intense nostalgia, and its victim risks being driven to recreate its feeling-tone as best he can.[434]

Yet Dostoevskii strongly feared that a fit would one day kill him. He writes to Anna on August 13, 1873 about some particularly acute physical after-effects of a fit, and adds: 'Очень, очень боюсь, чтоб не случилось еще припадка. ... я наверно знаю, что случись теперь, вот в это время, еще припадок – и я погиб. Удар будет. Я слышу это, я чувствую, что это так.' (29/1:289-290) Anna, of course, was witness to this fear many times and documented many of her husband's fits and their aftermath. One of these passages reads: 'Страх смерти был всегдашним явлением после припадка, и Федор Михайлович умолял меня не отходить от него, не оставлять его одного, как бы надеясь, что мое присутствие предохранит его от смерти.'[435] It is interesting to note that Dostoevskii refers to this fear on at least one occasion as 'мистический ужас', the term used by Ivan in *Униженные и*

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[433] This letter was by no means the only one in which Dostoevskii felt he was not much longer for this world. For example, in a letter to his stepson Pavel Isaev on January 7, 1876, he writes: 'Я знаю, что скоро умру' (29/2:71).
[434] de Jonge, p. 146
[435] Тюнькин (ed.), *Ф. М. Достоевский в воспоминаниях современников*, 2, pp. 80-81

оскорбленные. His notebook entry of January 29, 1870 reads: 'вдруг со мной опять сделался припадок, на яву, в комнате у Ани … четверть часа спустя после первого припадка. Когда очнулся, ужасно болела голова, долго не мог правильно говорить; Аня почевала со мной. (Мистический страх в сильнейшей степени)'[436].

The subconscious anomaly of 'night terror' even seems to make an appearance as part of this post-fit angst. In 1869, Dostoevskii describes some unusually acute physical pain shortly after a fit: '4-го Сентября припадок в Дрездене. Очень скоро после припадка, еще в постели – мучительное, буквально – невыносимое давление в груди. Чувствуется, что можно умереть от него.'[437] Night terror, a condition that occurs between sleep and waking, is usually defined by such a weight on the chest, as if someone is sitting on it. Those who suffer from such attacks confirm that they feel as if they cannot breathe – yet most can do little about it as they also suffer from sleep paralysis, where the mind seems to be awake but cannot control the body. The latter does not seem to be present in Dostoevskii's case, but the symptom of 'невыносимое давление' following the extreme subconscious activity of the epileptic aura suggests some form of night terror.

In his memoirs, B. G. Gerasimov highlights a possible root of this mortal fear in Dostoevskii by recounting the writer's visit to the doctor in the Altai town of Barnaul following his first *grand mal* fit. According to Gerasimov, the doctor, perhaps unwisely, said 'во время падучей больной может умереть от горловой спазмы'[438]. This may well be medically correct, but it must be what no person just diagnosed with epilepsy wants to hear – in particular someone who has just married for the first time when neither he nor Mariia Dmitrievna had any idea of his condition. Such a diagnosis, of an uncontrollable threat to his life, was bound to remain with Dostoevskii to the end of his days. It compounded his early feelings of *мистический ужас* and fear of dying, both in his sleep and from an attack of his nervous illness: the term *кондрашка*, which Dostoevskii used to describe an attack

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[436] Коншина (ed.), *Записные тетради Ф. М. Достоевского*, p. 81
[437] Ibid., p. 80
[438] Белов (ed.), *Ф. М. Достоевский в забытых и неизвестных воспоминаниях современников*, p. 136

of apoplexy, was 'a colloquial term' in his day 'for apoplectic stroke or sudden death in general'[439].

Epilepsy also seemed to have varying effects on Dostoevskii's eyes and vision – these occurrences may well be coincidence, but ought to be noted. The most peculiar incidence comes from the 1870 notebook entry that mentions the Tropman execution, which details post-ictal effects: 'Особенно по вечерам, при свечах, беспредметная ипохондрическая грусть и как-бы красный, кровавый оттенок (не цвет) на всем. Заниматься в эти дни почти невозможно.'[440] Such a strange, hue cast on his vision must be a frightening experience, and echoes the bloody hues in certain subconscious episodes of his fiction, most particularly the dream in which Raskol'nikov attempts to 're-murder' the pawnbroker. Moreover, Dostoevskii had actually physically damaged one of his eyes as a result of a fit, which became a constant visible mark of the dangers of epilepsy. Anna Grigor'evna tells us: 'Во время приступа эпилепсии Федор Михайлович, падая, наткнулся на какой-то острый предмет и сильно поранил свой правый глаз. Он стал лечиться у проф. Юнге, и тот предписал впускать в глаз капли атропина, благодаря челу зрачок сильно расширился.'[441] Anna confesses that this physical attribute was one of the first things that struck her about Dostoevskii, and she was probably not alone in her impression: 'что меня поразило, так это его глаза; они были разные: один – карий, в другом зрачок расширен во весь глаз и радужины незаметно. Эта двойственность глаз придавала взгляду Достоевского какое-то загадочное выражение.'[442]

The other predominant lasting side-effect Dostoevskii's epilepsy inflicted on him was his failing memory, which got progressively worse in his later years. Vsevolod Solov'ev recalls the author detailing how his sudden onset of epilepsy in Siberia permanently damaged his memory:

> во время каторги со мной случился первый припадок падучей, и с тех пор она меня не покидает. Все, что было со мною до этого первого припадка, каждый малейший случай из моей жизни, каждое

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[439] Rice, p. 8
[440] Коншина (ed.), *Записные тетради Ф. М. Достоевского*, p. 81
[441] Достоевская, *Воспоминания*, p. 51n
[442] Ibid., p. 51

> лицо, мною встреченное, все, что я читал, слышал, – я помню до мельчайших подробностей. Все, что началось после первого припадка, я очень часто забываю, иногда забываю совсем людей, которых знал хорошо, забываю лица. Забыл все, что написал после каторги; когда дописывал «Бесы», то был должен перечитать все сначала, потому что перезабыл даже имена действующих лиц…[443]

This curious switch from keen, almost photographic memory to one of faltering forgetfulness may not be exclusively the fault of epilepsy. Dostoevskii, after all, was in exile – cut off from family, friends and acquaintances – for ten years, a long time in which to recall at least all of the latter upon his return. Also, his change in outlook on life, a giant shift in priorities, may have subconsciously meant that his formerly reliable memory was partly 'sacrificed' for his new goals.

Yet this fading memory must have only added to the dreamlike states Dostoevskii found himself in post-fit. And even when he was feeling fit and well, the fact that he had even forgotten the characters and storylines of his own novels must have been disconcerting. In 1876 he writes an apologetic reply to Petr Vasil'evich Bykov, an editor who had asked him for an account of his biography:

> Вследствие падучей моей болезни, которая, впрочем, почти уже меня не беспокоит, я отчасти потерял память и – верите ли – забыл [...] сюжеты моих романов, […] даже «Преступление и наказание». Тем не менее общую-то связь жизни моей помню. Неподписанные статьи мои хоть и были... но я от них отрекаюсь. (29/2:80)

Even more disconcerting were the number of people who wrote to him on the most cordial of terms, claiming to know him – acquaintances Dostoevskii could not reciprocate. He replies to one S. A. Iur'ev in 1878:

> Но разве мы с Вами когда-нибудь виделись и были лично знакомы? Вы не поверите, как часто подобные напоминания тяжело на меня действуют. Дело в том, что у меня уже двадцать пять лет падучая болезнь, приобретенная в Сибири. Эта болезнь отняла у меня мало-помалу память на лица и на события до такой степени, что я (буквально) забыл даже все сюжеты и подробности моих романов, и так как иные не перепечатывал с тех пор, как они напечатаны, то они остаются мне буквально неизвестны. И потому не рассердитесь, что я забыл те обстоятельства и то время, когда мы были знакомы и

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[443] *Литературное наследство*, 83, p. 357n; taken from *Воспоминания о Ф. М. Достоевском Всеволода Соловьева*, Санкт-Петербург, 1881, p. 10

> когда встречались с Вами. Со мной это часто бывает и относительно других лиц. (30/1:37)

In the same year he writes to one Leonid Vasil'evich Grigor'ev:

> я *совсем забыл* не только Вас, но и Юрасова, про которого Вы упоминаете в письме Вашем. […] Я должен Вам сказать, что я страдаю падучею болезнию, и она отнимает у меня совершенно память, особенно к некоторым событиям. Верите ли, что я, поминутно, не узнаю в лицо людей, с которыми познакомился всего с месяц назад. Кроме того – я совсем забываю мои собственные сочинения. В эту зиму прочел один мой роман, «Преступление и наказание», который написал 10 лет тому, и более двух третей романа прочел совершенно за новое, незнакомое, как будто и не я писал, до того я успел забыть его. Но всё же, думаю, не настолько же я забывчив, чтоб забыть такого человека, которого посещал (хотя и в 60-м году), у которого встречался с людьми, то есть Юрасова например. Никакого Юрасова я теперь не могу припомнить. Повторяю, нет ли с Вашей стороны ошибки? (30/1:19)

There is a slight chance of mistaken identity on the addressee's part here – but it must be borne in mind that Dostoevskii was, at the time, one of the most famous writers in Russia. It is perhaps more likely that letters such as these may have been testing the waters to take possible advantage of the writer's forgetfulness. But, in the end, memory loss through epilepsy is the likeliest reason of all. Some acquaintances even felt offended by Dostoevskii's forgetfulness of their name or face. Anna Grigor'evna recalls a few instances, most notably one concerning the writer F. N. Berg, who had contributed to Dostoevskii's journal *Время*, but whom Dostoevskii could simply not remember, even when confronted by him. She adds: 'И как много врагов, особенно литературных, Федор Михайлович приобрел своею беспамятностью.'[444] Dostoevskii even forgot Anna's maiden name when asked by the consulate in Dresden, and had to return home to ask her.

On the other hand, Anna mentions how her husband's memories of the distant past were exemplary: 'Самые недавние события совершенно им забывались, между тем он отлично помнил давно прошедшее и изумлял своих родных яркостью своих воспоминаний.'[445]

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[444] Достоевская, *Воспоминания*, pp. 343-44
[445] In Гроссман, *Семинарий по Достоевскому*, p. 60

The final side-effect of Dostoevskii's epilepsy that ought to be mentioned is the most tragic: the hereditary nature of his disease, which resulted in the death of his son Aleksei at three years of age in 1878. A little more than two weeks after an initial minor fit, Aleksei, or Alesha as his father lovingly called him, died after an agonising epileptic fit lasting twelve hours and forty minutes.[446] Anna recalls: 'Федор Михайлович был страшно поражен этою смертию. … особенно угнетало то, что ребенок погиб от эпилепсии, – болезни, от него унаследованной.'[447]

This was truly one of the low points of Dostoevskii's full life; a life that in its second half had been affected at every turn by the affliction of epilepsy. Much of Dostoevskii's emotions over Aleksei's death were poured into his project at the time, *Братья Карамазовы*. One of its darker effects on the novel was Dostoevskii's afflicting hereditary mental illness on some characters, 'whether congenital illness evident from birth (the epileptic Smerdiakov born of the idiot Lizaveta) or an inherited predisposition (the hallucinatory dementia of Ivan Karamazov, whose mother exhibited "a strange character").'[448] But more positively, the author was perhaps able to draw some hope from knowing that a piece of his son would live on in the name of the youngest Karamazov, Alesha, the last 'beautiful' character he created; and also from the novel's heartfelt closing scenes of young Iliusha's funeral, which reinforces the centrality of children to Dostoevskii's last work.

The author's epilepsy, therefore, was the basis of this final scene's power: as an act of redemption for his young son who was afflicted with his hereditary disease; but also in the passage's tenderness and hope for Aleksei, now in heaven. 'Не забудем же его никогда, вечная ему и хорошая память в наших сердцах, отныне и во веки веков!' (15:196) says Alesha to Iliusha's friends, building on Father Zosima's words to a grieving mother: 'знай и ты, […] что и твой младенец наверно теперь предстоит пред престолом господним, и радуется, и веселится, и о тебе бога молит. А потому и ты плачь, но радуйся.' (14:46)

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[446] Буданова, Фридлендер (eds.), *Летопись жизни и творчества Ф. М. Достоевского*, 3, p. 273
[447] Достоевская, *Воспоминания*, p. 321
[448] Rice, p. 203

CONCLUSION

Dostoevskii's use of what has been termed 'imagery of the subconscious' is wide and varied. Ultimately, by displaying the essential psychology of characters at varying subconscious 'depths', it shapes the reader's perception of Dostoevskii's character-driven works as a whole. In much of the imagery's connection to the author's own experiences, his very own psychology can be ascertained, or at the very least glimpsed. It seems difficult to claim, however, like Alfred Bem did in the 1930s, that 'анализ творчества должен дать *материал для возсоздания его личности во всей ея психической сложности*' and 'сны-произведения Достоевского – ключ к его личности.'[449] Such is the impossibility of comprehensively analysing a historical character that Dostoevskii's true psychology can never be wholly deduced.

Yet analytical attributes are very much evident even in the most 'shallow' form of this imagery, daydreams, which underpin the consistent theme of *мечтательность* in practically all of Dostoevskii's works of the 1840s, and beyond. While their content can initially be seen as symbolically rich, daydreams in fact reveal little of the character's psychology. The real facet of interest here is the very aspect of *мечтательность* and its effect on character, which is meticulously detailed by Dostoevskii throughout his entire literary output: its fleeting pleasures; its tormenting addictiveness, which becomes obsessive; and ultimately its hopeless futility, its vicious circle of 'impotence' that leads to the bitterness and isolation of the Underground Man; or the risk of brutal awakening to reality that leads to the death of Efimov. The dangers of *мечтательность* are laid bare by the very fact that few of Dostoevskii's *мечтатели* are embodied in the reality of the text. They have little history, even less of a future, and live purely in the present; albeit a dreamlike present isolated from social norms. Such outcasts are therefore useless to society and cannot contribute to its causes. There is also the danger of *мечтательность* evolving into the idealisms of Raskol'nikov, Myshkin and Ivan Karamazov, who in their own ways strive towards a moral absolute as a result of their *мечты* and, consequently, pay for it psychologically. Yet *мечтательность* also has its

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[449] Бем, 'Снотворчество,' in Бем (ed.), *Достоевский – Психоаналитические этюды*, pp. 34, 53

positives, not least in keeping the prison convicts sane in *Записки из мертвого дома*. Dostoevskii also recognises that a certain amount of wonder at the extremes of reality can enrich life.

The author himself knew the tumult of sensations of *мечтательность* from first-hand experience as a *мечтатель* and 'фантазер' himself; attributes which allowed him to mentally cope with penal servitude, yet also led him towards self-destruction in his gambling addictions and obsessive infatuations. He was also more than aware of the power that a happy childhood, recollected through the imagery of daydream-memory, has to evince good in humankind, and influence one's own path in life and that of others. From the haunting memories of Netochka Nezvanova to the closing lines of *Братья Карамазовы*, this form of imagery of the subconscious was another that featured throughout Dostoevskii's entire literary output; and such a recollection, that of Marei, from some obscure corner of his mind was to underpin a personal regeneration of belief and will in the author himself.

In the daydream's deeper-running aspect of 'inspirational illumination', the non-fiction accounts are in fact the most powerful examples of this imagery: Dostoevskii's new-found love of the Russian *народ* after his remote but vivid memory of Marei is a case in point. It is here that daydream rumination comes to a climax and an objective answer; understanding or insight is gleaned and hints at something existential. Equal in power is Dostoevskii's 'vision' on the Neva, which fundamentally changed his literary outlook in the 1840s, just as similar 'visions' alter the outlooks of Arkadii Ivanovich, Raskol'nikov and Arkadii Dolgorukii. Such moments also break the dangerous spell of *мечтательность* by granting the *мечтатель* an objective view of reality and offering freedom from the world of daydreams. While this can be to their detriment, Dostoevskii always hints that a life lived in reality is worth much more than one lived chasing *мечты*.

Episodes of dreamlike reality rise and fall through various levels on a sliding scale of subconscious depth, according to the 'continuity hypothesis'. At its 'shallow' end this can be a simple confusion, but can deepen into obsessive *мечтательность* and, even further, extreme delusion where reality comes into question and the experience borders on (or even dips into) dream. Textual layering is used to great effect by

Dostoevskii in these episodes to obscure reality and add subconscious depth – but it gives such episodes an ambiguity that make attempts at characterisation difficult.

Alternatively, conscious events can seem so intense as to defy belief: be they life-changing or particularly bizarre occurrences; the fear of mortality inherent in *мистический ужас*; or the very day-to-day life, both blessed and cursed, of that 'most intentional city' of 'strange influences', St Petersburg. Dream logic is the overriding mode of narrative here, and while perhaps not strictly imagery of the subconscious, characters' reactions to such episodes of dreamlike intensity allow us again to gauge their psychology: they can be construed as how they might intuitively act in an actual *сон*.

The very possibility that Dostoevskii may have lived at least some of his later life in a dreamlike state due to the inter-ictal and prodromal effects of epilepsy indicates that the author perhaps regarded such 'fantastic realism' as a normal mode of reality. At the very least, he certainly appreciated that the fantastic nature of reality could outstrip fiction, something his own personal experiences – most notably his mock execution – and his avid interest in journalism confirmed to him. Moreover, in presenting us with such experiences, he leads the reader to question and analyse his or her own reality.

This fantastic realism comes to a head in the author's hallucinatory imagery, which is displayed by Dostoevskii in fascinating, almost supernatural episodes in which the subconscious of the character is laid bare by a psychic projection amid conscious reality. Above all, Ivan Karamazov's conversation with a 'devil' is an intricately detailed and psychiatrically accurate account of a disordered, disintegrating mind, played out in what seems to be reality. Most hallucinations used by Dostoevskii are products of troubled psyches and convey a sense of vengeance, as if the character's subconscious is rebelling against him: the hallucinations of Raskol'nikov and Stavrogin can even be viewed as a kind of psychic self-flagellation. For Ippolit and Ivan, their hallucinations seem to embody a certain sense of mocking triumph of irrational logic over the reasoned mind – the dark, universal fears of madness and death that haunt even the most rational intellectual. Yet there is also a sense that

hallucinations work towards an ultimate good, in stirring the character to take stock and hold his moral conscience to account.

Although there is precious little evidence to display an experiential link between author and character in terms of hallucinations, the mention of such episodes as a side-effect of the author's *кондрашки* in the 1840s shows it is likely he had first-hand knowledge of this too. What is known is that Dostoevskii's keen interest in medical textbooks made certain that such episodes in his works were scientifically plausible – and therefore even more frighteningly vivid.

Such lack of primary evidence also hampers a thorough investigation of Dostoevskii's own experience of split personality. Yet *Двойник* does not suffer as a result. There are in fact many parallels we can draw between the author and Goliadkin which can be used to explain exactly how the correct psychic conditions for the appearance of a double could appear. It is a different account of a degenerating mind from Ivan Karamazov's encounter, yet despite being printed 35 years previously, it is just as rich in psychological detail in its projection of subconscious desires and in its portrayal of psychic self-defence. It also connects subtly with the theme of the 'little man' in Russian literature, in showing the ultimate fate for any downtrodden clerk who dares aspire to be something more. In doing so, it offers an insight into Dostoevskii's social and political leanings of the time.

Dreams offer the bulk of subconscious content both in Dostoevskii's works and his non-fiction. Never superfluous or simple symbolic embellishments, they tend to either confirm or expand aspects of a character's psychology and can on occasion reveal whole new facets: perhaps most visibly in the case of Stavrogin's *сон* of the Golden Age. Operating as they do in relatively short passages of no more than a few paragraphs, *сны* offer a condensed view of the character's subconscious and enable the reader to grasp essential elements of the character's psychology that are not immediately apparent, or not apparent at all, on the conscious plane of the text.

Like Dostoevskii's characters and the author himself, we can all claim to have had basic anxiety dreams and those of wish-fulfilment. But dreams assume a more symbolic role in Dostoevskii when they imply a warning for the dreamer. Warning dreams are rarely heeded, and thus their importance for the character and novel as a

whole is boosted. For in many of the dreams we see, as well as a symbolic representation of their present state, an almost inexorable conclusion to the character's actions, planned or already perpetrated. Raskol'nikov's famous *сон* of the beaten mare even contains hints as to the route to his spiritual salvation, in the young Rodia's destination of the village church. Such dreams also make manifest in symbols the subject of the character's anxiety: be it suppressed guilt (Raskol'nikov and Vel'chaninov) or fear of dying (Ippolit).

Other heavily symbolic dreams have an ultimately cathartic effect which, to a greater degree than episodes of inspirational illumination, can alter a character's perception of the world and their place in it. Svidrigailov finds that ultimately there is no place for him at all in the world; alternatively, Alesha and Dmitrii Karamazov find renewed purpose in their life through their *сны*.

There are accounts of Dostoevskii himself experiencing each of these kinds of dreams, and these records highlight much of his own psychology: many of his anxiety dreams, for example, display his devotion and love for his second wife and their children by encapsulating his fears for them whenever they are separated. Less explainable and more symbolic are the striking examples of anxiety dreams featuring either Dostoevskii's dead father or brother, which uncannily seemed to herald some disaster in the writer's life, be it the death of a loved one, a downturn in his own health, or a financial crisis.

The three *сны* of a so-called 'Golden Age' of humanity offer particularly powerful catharsis or insight and are strikingly similar in their portrayal of a paradise society juxtaposed with our own degraded world. Despite being a purely fictional construct with no experiential influence, they still have great worth in that they offer valuable insights into the dreamer in the text – the 'human' Stavrogin behind the impassive mask, the philanthropist Versilov, the zest for life hidden in the Ridiculous Man – and, moreover, they present aspects of a universal psychology, such as man's need for both suffering and God, and, in 'Сон смешного человека', an overview of humankind's development after the biblical Fall. In doing so, these dreams attain the status of myth – that is to say, they can be viewed as imagery drawn from the well of mankind's collective experience, deep in the subconscious.

Casting its shadow over both Dostoevskii's use of imagery of the subconscious and his experience of subconscious phenomena – and indeed, most of his life and works – is the factor of epilepsy, which influenced the author's texts to varying degrees. Even though there is much debate over the moment of its onset, it is clear that pre-epileptic symptoms or at least factors of his 'nervous illness' had a significant role to play in Dostoevskii's life in the 1840s. As such, there is little doubt that some experiences found their way into even his earliest works. *Мечтательность* is one example: its daydream-reveries may have been an early example of the dreamlike reality of the epileptic prodrome and this is seen to its greatest effect in Ordynov's dreamlike confusion.

There is no doubt, however, that the later works were affected by epilepsy. Even form and style were afflicted, as is most evident in *Идиот*. But most pertinently, the different forms of imagery of the subconscious investigated in this thesis, and Dostoevskii's own experiences of them, may have all had their source in the disease.

Imagery of the subconscious reaches its 'deepest' point in the epileptic aura, which moves psychology into the realms of the mystical and mythical. In doing so, it seems to raise Prince Myshkin, its primary witness, to the status of a saint. He has been 'blessed' with this image of eternity and his consequent outlook allows him to effect good – however naively – in the contemporary society in which he mingles. In seeming to hint at an answer to life, where time stops and eternity is glimpsed, the aura's imagery plugs directly into universal longing for ultimate understanding and insight. It draws from the deep psychic well of mankind's collective experience in its intensity and, in its fictional representation, offers the unafflicted reader a taste of this knowledge. But, ultimately, it remains beyond knowing. For the reader, this fact is simply frustrating; for the epileptic experiencing the ecstatic aura such moments are devastating, as briefly-experienced harmony is replaced by the excruciating pain of diseased mortality with the onset of epileptic seizure. Dostoevskii's use of the ecstatic aura, as has been surmised, must have stemmed from at least one experiential moment – no matter how minor it may have seemed in comparison to his fictional accounts, which he probably saw as the ideal vehicle with which to do his experience justice. That inkling, along with a knowledge of the ecstatic aura from medical texts

of the time, was enough to transform that experience into some of his most powerful prose.

Dostoevskii, perhaps most importantly for himself, saw how his affliction could be transformed into a power of overwhelming beauty, peace and harmony, for however short a time it lasted. Such seconds were worth 'десять лет жизни, пожалуй, всю жизнь', as Strakhov records Dostoevskii saying.[450] Even from his gravest affliction, Dostoevskii could draw positives: he would rather have experienced these moments of bliss despite their cost than not at all, just as he would rather be with Christ even if it was concretely proven that he was not the son of God.

There is a general trend apparent that the 'deeper' the subconscious experience, the more powerful the effect on the character. This seems to be due to a closer proximity to a realm of fundamental 'human-ness', to a grand template or matrix of ingrained, primal and instinctual human emotions, fears and motivations which equates to a 'collective unconscious' or 'preconscious stream'. Yet imagery of the subconscious at any 'depth', even at a 'shallow' point nearing consciousness itself, appears to allow the relevant character tantalising glimpses of this inherent well of human experience, whether they understand it or not. This is testament to Dostoevskii's use of such imagery as samples of an ever-present source from which to draw the fundamental truths of human experiences.

Such insights may come in a dawning moment of inspirational illumination during rumination or immersion in music or literature; they may be a result of illness, when derangement leads to archetypes becoming projected in reality (in the case of Ordynov, for example); characters may gain access to and become driven or possessed by a compartmentalised collective consciousness, such as Raskol'nikov in St Petersburg; they may witness dramatisations of fundamental human knowledge that also carry a personal message, as in the *сны* of the Golden Age and Raskol'nikov's apocalypse. The 'plugged-in' connection to existence felt by some characters even takes on a spiritual dimension and becomes an epiphany bestowing a sense of purpose in life (Myshkin, the Ridiculous Man, Alesha Karamazov).

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[450] Тюнькин (ed.), *Ф. М. Достоевский в воспоминаниях современников*, 1, p. 412

Yet such experiences harbour a darker side, ever-present in the collective human subconscious, which culminates in existential angst, the fear of the abyss, oblivion or dissolution that, paradoxically, Myshkin teeters on at the moment of his greatest ecstasy. It features throughout Dostoevskii's works in the form of *мистический ужас*, a motif of imagery given inherent power by the author's own fear of imminent death – be it through 'lethargic sleep' or before the rifles of the tsar's executioners. The latter experience helped Dostoevskii come to an uneasy acceptance of death, but his fear was still evident in his post-ictal moods – such was the mortal agony of his epileptic seizures. Such first-hand experience of death's proximity mean that passages in his works in which it is symbolised in the subconscious mode are some of his most haunting and terrifying: for example, Ivan's sensations before the appearance of Nelli; Ippolit's terrifying *сон* of the reptile creature; Dostoevskii's many symbolic spiders; and even the fear of death inherent in the potential for insanity within us all, as is hinted at in the subtext of *Двойник*.

Episodes of subconscious experience, as has been detailed with reference to Dostoevskii, also seem to give rise to instinctual drives and primitive fears that can become manifest in reality. Even the aspect of inspiration from which great artists such as Dostoevskii draw seems to give momentary access to this well of fundamental human knowledge. We could say that their interpretation of such inspiration is what constitutes 'great' literature. It is both the writer's challenge and tragedy that a great deal of the essence of that inspiration is naturally lost in the time between synapse reaction and ink to paper – yet even the slightest encapsulation of this essence can be powerful enough for the reader; even a hint of skilfully expressed fundamental knowledge is enough to trigger instinctual, emotional responses to an artistic work. Consequently, a fragment of that moment of fleeting universal connectivity becomes available to the reader in the description of the ecstatic aura. Such is the power of imagery of the subconscious. Elizabeth Dalton writes:

> For him [the artist], words and images and stories reverberate with their earliest meanings, and his work becomes for us, too, the way back to that archaic world whose desires and energies are the well-springs of life. ... The oldest and darkest places of the mind hold images of radiant beauty, but also nightmare revelations of horror, filth, and pain. In the greatest works, the energy and the violent clarity of this primordial experience is somehow brought back from the depths alive, so that the world available

> to consciousness and the ego is invested with a brilliant sense of authentic life and power. To achieve this, the artist must submit to a vision of the savage energies at the heart of existence. We recognize that vision in the almost unbearable intensity of truth in the great works. Their beauty is terrible, like agony.[451]

Dostoevskii's frustrations at being unable to fully access these 'well-springs of life' are apparent in his narrative passages on dreams. However, at the same time, he clearly takes great pleasure in pursuing this aim; and, perhaps, he viewed his affliction of epilepsy as a means with which to further it. Being naturally attuned to subconscious phenomena, perhaps he viewed the onset of his blessed curse, with its varied attendant symptoms, as some kind of existential confirmation that this was his purpose in life.[452] But to say there is an 'epileptic source' for his works, as Louis Breger does,[453] is perhaps not exactly correct. Instead, epilepsy gave Dostoevskii access to a deeper understanding of the varying levels of the subconscious, and gave him constant fuel to feed his pursuit for this understanding. In tapping areas few had dared to explore before him, he was able to connect to his readers on a universal level through the common, if unusual, experiences of subconscious phenomena. According to Lancelot Whyte, 'his penetrating insight unto unusual states of mind has never been surpassed.

> Yet the immense response to his novels shows that the orientation of his thought must correspond closely to a widespread experience in our time. … Dostoevsky was, like every other fertile genius, a man of his time, bringing an old tradition of ideas to new life by reliving it in his own passionate experience. Here the personal and the universal are fused. Dostoevsky seems to be describing freak pathology; but he is illustrating at the same time less-recognized levels of the normal. Some of his most striking characters are so riddled with contradictions that we can scarcely accept them – but what about ourselves? To take an extreme example: Dostoevsky seems to be excessively concerned with the quality of a man's consciousness when he believes that death is near – but is this so irrelevant as we may consciously suppose?[454]

It is in his descriptions of 'freak pathology' that Dostoevskii tries to trace a route to the secrets of mankind's collected experience, Jung's 'collective unconscious',

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[451] Dalton, pp. 54-55
[452] Hypergraphia, after all, is a symptom in many epileptics and is seen as an attempt to make sense of the disease. See Breger, pp. 244-45
[453] See Breger, pp. 244-45
[454] Whyte, pp. 166-67

buried in the depths of the subconscious mode; and along the way, many of his great themes, which themselves speak of a universality of experience, are fleshed out – not least the idea that 'все за всех виноваты' (15:31). This message, in fact, is inherent in the idea of a collective subconscious: all of humanity is connected by common genes and behaviour, and therefore we should take responsibility for every other person's actions. Childlike, innocent forgiveness would become inherent and mankind could prosper. A lofty aim, perhaps, but, as Dostoevskii indicates at many points in his works, it is the striving towards this aim that can bestow peace and happiness to humankind. Such knowledge is gleaned from imagery of the subconscious in Dostoevskii's works, and formed part of his ultimate aim: to find out 'что значит человек и жизнь' (28/1:63).

This pursuit led Dostoevskii to the extremes of human experience: both his own, and that of his characters. The former were modified to inform the latter, so as to reveal and flesh out the writer's great themes. As such, when we read Dostoevskii's works we are to a degree reading him, as his characters come to embody his ideas. They are given a sense of independence within the text, much as ideas are ruminated over in our minds, and interact with other character-ideas, creating dramatised debate. Yet, all the while, Dostoevskii's characters remain human and believable, despite their proclivity towards searching out the extremes of the idea they embody, which can themselves become the focus of imagery of the subconscious. To turn this idea back on itself, it is Dostoevskii's very skill in effectively and realistically relating moments of subconscious power that help bestow his works with such realism.

Without such fantastic realism of extremes, his novels would become empty shells. For it is in the vicinity of the alternating poles of ecstasy and agony – blissful visions of eternity and the horrifying fear of mortality – 'pro and contra' – that Dostoevskii's works are played out. The dramatisation and characterisation of such extremes is testament to the vast scope of his works; and also to the imagery of subconscious experience that so enriches them with a psychological insight, which draws the reader instinctually into the author's world.

APPENDIX – RUSSIAN DREAMS

The Russian language has various words for 'dream', each of which emphasises different concepts of the one English word. All feature in Dotoevskii's works to varying degrees.

Perhaps the most literal translations of 'dream' are the words *сон*, which denotes the experienced or experiential dream that occurs in the subconscious when the dreamer is asleep or half-awake, and also means 'sleep' itself; and *мечта* (or the lesser used *мечтание*), which can be used both as a general term for *сны*, but is used more often as an expression of a wish or desire.[455] These two words are by far the most commonly used words for 'dream' in the Russian language.

Between these two poles of dream meaning – the experiential, subconscious *сон* (and nightmare, *кошмар*, a direct loan from the French *cauchemar*) and yearned-for, conscious *мечта* – lie varying gradations of the dream. Of these, the nouns *бред* and *греза* are most easily defined.

Бред is most commonly defined as a delirious dream, usually brought on by illness or extreme anxiety; it can also refer to the nonsense spoken by the dreamer in his or her delirium. Dictionaries spanning back to the great Russian lexicographer Vladimir Dal' equate *грезы* with daydreams and reveries in the vein of those conjured by Dostoevskii's *мечтатели*. It is curious, then, that Dostoevskii largely ignores this word in favour of *мечты* to describe the idle fantasies of the *мечтатель*, as well as the idea-daydreams of the likes of Arkadii Dolgorukii, to which it would better pertain. An explanation may lie in Dal''s dictionary, which describes *мечта* as 'всякая картина воображения и ирга мысли; пустая несбыточная выдумка; призрак, видение.'[456] Although Dal''s work did not begin appearing until 1863, and so could not have affected Dostoevskii's early works, such terminology and meaning was likely to have been in common usage. Dostoevskii may have also appreciated the stylistic neatness of his *мечтатели* dreaming *мечты*. It must also be pointed out

[455] Shaw, 'Raskol'nikov's Dreams', pp. 132-33
[456] Владимир Даль, *Толковый словарь живого великорусского языка*, Государственное издательство иностранных словарей, Москва, 1955

that both *бред* and *греза* can often refer to general experiential dreams, albeit tending towards their respective definitions.

Сновидение is another Russian word for dream that, like *мечтание* to *мечта*, can stand as a lesser-used corollary to *сон*. However, there is an additional meaning to *сновидение* that has its origins in folk beliefs; that, as well as giving access to the world of dreams, it seems to allow the dreamer to attain a different, spiritual plane of reality:

> сновидение является одним из способов общения с другим миром – миром душ, теней и сверхъестественных сущностей. Через сновидения человек получает ответы на волнующие его вопросы, получает наставления, советы, знания о прошлом и будущем. Не случайно в народной традиции сильна вера в гадания с помощью сновидения. Подобная информация может быть как непосредственной, так и закодированной в определенных образах. … Толкование сновидения и его образов представляет собой закрепленный в культуре путь познания мира.[457]

So while the simple *сон* travels deep into the subconscious, *сновидения* give the impression of more lofty, transcendent visions. Alesha Karamazov's dream of the first miracle, in which he communicates with his dead mentor Father Zosima, can certainly be taken as an example.

In a similar vein is the *обмирание*, which, like the *сновидение*, seems to involve travel to another plane, brought on by an *обморок*, a faint. But whereas the *сновидение* suggests transcendence, *обмирания*, common in Russian folk tradition, seem to plumb the depths of the psyche by visiting an almost mythical *«тот» свет*. According to S. M. Tolstaia, archetypal characters are a common feature, as is the unearthing of a great secret. *Обмирания* also appear to be better 'structured' and less haphazard than basic *сны* or *сновидения*, hinting at their possible mythic origins in a deep subconscious layer equating to Jung's collective unconscious:

> в обмираниях часто фигурирует «проводник» (старик, «сивенький дедок», умерший родственник, персонаж сакрального мира – ангел, архангел, святой), который одновременно «интерпретирует»

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[457] М. М. Валенцова, 'Полесская традиция о сновидениях,' in О. Б. Христофорова (ed.), *Сны и видения в народной культуре. Мифологический, религиозно-мистический и культурно-психологический аспекты*, Российский государственный гуманитарный университет, Москва, 2002, pp. 44-45

> увиденное; … путешествующий по загробному миру получает там какое-то тайное знание (в частности, знание дня собственной кончины) и обязуется под угрозой смерти не раскрывать его; наконец, в жанровом и сюжетном отношении тексты обмираний отличаются гораздо большей определенностью и более жесткой структурой сравнительно с рассказами о явлении покойников в сновидениях.[458]

Interestingly, these intense dreams are said to be experienced when the dreamer falls into a deathlike, lethargic sleep following an *обморок* – much like the ones Dostoevskii feared in his youth. Here we see another side to the author's existential angst and *мистический ужас*, one that was perhaps exacerbated by these powerful dreams, which could, according to folk belief, reveal the day of your death.[459] Although it was not a term the author used (though the *обморок* is common in his works), we can draw a parallel between *обмирания* and, at the very least, Ordynov's second dream, the dream of the Ridiculous Man, and possibly the other 'Golden Age' dreams.

[458] С. М. Толстая, 'Иномирное пространство сна' in Христофорова (ed.), *Сны и видения в народной культуре*, p. 212
[459] Ibid.

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